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THE DAWN OF CHRISTIANITY

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BY

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"THE LIFE OF JESUS IN THE LIGHT OF THE HIGHER CRITICISM"

"GREAT RELIGIOUS TEACHERS OF THE EAST"



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PREFATORY NOTE

The Ethical Culture movement is characterized, in part, by the freedom of its fellowship. Occupying a neutral position on all questions pertaining to theology and philosophy, it accords its lecturers entire freedom of thought and of speech, at the same time leaving the members equally free to accept or reject the platform utterances of leaders.

In the light of this cardinal characteristic of the Ethical movement, it will be understood that the views expressed in this book commit no one but the author, he having no right, as one of the leaders of an Ethical Society, to speak for anyone but himself.

INTRODUCTION

This course of lectures, delivered on Sunday evenings in the Meeting House of the Society for Ethical Culture during the winter of 1914, is a continuation of the series given in the preceding year and subsequently published under the title, "The Life of Jesus in the Light of the Higher Criticism." The purpose of this sequel is to carry the story of the origin of Christianity on from the death of Jesus to the birth of the new religion, noting the precise part played in this process by the genius of Paul and the unique contribution made by the author of the Fourth Gospel in supplementing the Christology of the Apostle to the Gentiles with an account of the historic Jesus in terms they could understand. The first two lectures relate to preliminary questions touching the formation of the New Testament as a collection of sacred books and the reliability of the record as a source of information on the development of religious thought and organization during the period under consideration. We shall then see how, after the crucifixion, the bereaved and despondent disciples came to themselves and under the inspiration of a great conviction concerning the immortality of their Master, rallied in Jerusalem to make converts to that convic-

tion and await the return of Jesus in the rôle of Messiah. We shall then take a survey of the life and missionary labors of this primitive community of disciples and converts into whose midst came Paul after his religious transformation on the way to Damascus. How this quasi-apostle arrived at the conclusion that the heterodox Judaism represented by the Jerusalem church was not radical enough, and how, as a result of his controversy with the brethren, he achieved the advancement of their religion to its logical and necessary outcome in Christianity,—this will form the subject-matter of the fifth lecture in the series.

In the first half of the second century the Christian Church was confronted with a most perplexing difficulty. For nearly a hundred years the hope had been fervently held that Jesus would return from Heaven to usher in the heavenly kingdom. The church in all localities and in all its undertakings had been organized and maintained on the basis of this eschatology. But now that the great expectation had failed of fulfilment after a century of prayerful watching and waiting, the problem arose of meeting the disappointment and saving the newly-created religion from the danger of dissolution. The existing order of society, it was supposed, would soon disappear and many a belief and practice had been instituted on the basis of that assumption. Now that it seemed to be ill-founded, the problem was to readjust inherited beliefs and practices to a society that showed no signs of undergoing the expected miraculous transformation. The solution of that problem introduces us to Hermas, whose "Shepherd" furnishes illustration of how the read-

justment was effected, and to this absorbingly interesting phase of the dawn of Christianity the sixth lecture will be devoted. Then will follow, in the two closing lectures, first, a discussion of the place of the Fourth Gospel in early Christian literature and, second, the unique and indispensable service rendered by its author in acquainting Gentiles educated in Paul's Christology, but knowing little or nothing of the historic Jesus, with the story of his life. This he based on the biographies of Jewish evangelists (the Synoptics), presenting Jesus in terms of a Greek philosophical concept long familiar to thoughtful Gentiles. By thus rounding out the work of Paul, adding to his doctrine of salvation an intelligible account of the person of the Savior, the author of the Fourth Gospel achieved the one thing needful to make Christianity a complete religious system, one of the great religions of the world.

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THE DAWN OF CHRISTIANITY

I

WHERE DID THE NEW TESTAMENT COME FROM?

The New Testament is not a book, but a collection of books. To speak more accurately still, it is a specially selected collection or "canon" of scriptures. The word "Testament" is a synonym for covenant, or agreement, and in Biblical usage refers to the compact made by Yahweh with the Hebrews, through Abraham, according to which He would be their protector and helper if they would worship Him and obey His commandments. But when Paul proclaimed a new and broader covenant, one between God and man, and, according to the apostle, sealed by the blood of Jesus, it became necessary to distinguish the later from the older covenant. For this purpose the terms "Old Testament" and "New Testament" were used. We see the distinctions already intimated by Paul

in his second letter to the converts at Corinth. There he applies the term "Old Testament" to the books that testified to the older covenant, now superseded, indeed, yet held in reverent remembrance and regard.[1] Hence the later documents, testifying to the new covenant, came to be called the New Testament.

The word "canon" means a measuring-rule. Applied to sacred books it indicates those that conformed to a given rule or standard of inspiration, those in which the will of God was revealed, or those worthy to be selected for public reading at church services. And when a book was declared to have conformed to such a standard or canon, it was said to be canonized. Hence the collection of books thus duly accredited by ecclesiastical authority constituted the New Testament canon. The first known use of the word canon in connection with the Bible is in a work by Athanasius, "Decrees of the Synod of Nicæa," published in 350 A.D., in which the term appears in relation to the "Shepherd of Hermas" as a book not to be included in the list of sacred books that may be read at church services (*"μὴ ὂν ἐκ του κανόνος"*).

The Hindus, Persians, Arabs and Assyrians

[1] II Cor. 3: 14.

had the idea of a canon of scriptures, but no nation ever held it quite so strongly as did the Jews, because no other stood in such intense and intimate relation to deity, no other possessed a covenant like unto theirs. Hence the doctrine of the Synagogue, from the beginning, was that all the books of the Old Testament had their origin in Divine inspiration. And both the canon and the theory of it passed over into the Christian Church. At first its only sacred book was the Old Testament, but when the collection known as the New Testament was formed, the distinction between the Old and the New Testament inevitably obtained.

Four distinct types of literature characterize the New Testament collection. The four biographies of Jesus are followed by a book of apostolic history and legend, and this, in turn, by letters, some bearing the name of the great Apostle to the Gentiles and others the names of disciples of Jesus and their fellow-workers, while an apocalypse, designated "The Revelation of St. John the Divine," brings the collection to a close. All these writings appeared in the course of the century extending from 52 A.D., the probable date of the First Epistle to the Thessalonians, to 150 A.D., the date assigned

to the Second Epistle of Peter. But though all these constituent parts of the New Testament had been written by the middle of the second century, they were not immediately gathered into a single authoritative collection. All had a pre-canonical history, the details of which we must, for the most part, surmise. In the case of the gospels, for example, some light is thrown on their acceptance and origin by two of the early Christian Fathers, Justin the Martyr and Papias. Justin is our earliest witness to the existence of the gospels. A copious writer he was, and most important among his extant works is his "Dialogue with Trypho the Jew." Here we find numerous quotations from the Old Testament, prefixed with the phrase, "Thus saith the Holy Spirit," indicating that the book is for him an inspired and sacred authority. He quotes also many passages from other sources, passages that we meet with in the gospels. But none of these does Justin prefix with "Thus saith the Holy Spirit"; he simply remarks that they are quotations from "Recollections of the Apostles." Only once does he attach an apostolic name to a quotation, and then he refers it to the "Recollections of Peter." Justin, moreover, quotes verses that have no parallel in our

gospels and which may have been drawn from gospels long since lost, proving that in his day, 140 A.D., our four gospels were not yet regarded as separate and inspired scriptures, i. e., they were not yet canonized.

Contemporary with Justin lived Papias, bishop of Hieropolis, in Phrygia. He was the author of an elaborate work on "Expositions of Sayings of the Lord." Of these only fragments remain, preserved by the first Church historian, Eusebius, who wrote his famous ecclesiastical history about the year 350. Turning to these fragments of what Papias wrote, we find first of all this interesting statement: "Matthew wrote the words of the Lord in the Hebrew dialect (the Aramaic, spoken by the Jews), and everyone interpreted them as he was able (i. e., translated them as well as he could)"—language which intimates that Papias treated these writings as uncanonized literature. And he adds that to him *oral* tradition seemed much more valuable than the written tradition, because of the variety of its versions. Papias, we may be sure, had not seen this Aramaic work, else he would have mentioned it. Of the connection between these Aramaic "logia" or sayings and our Gospel of Matthew we know nothing. But we

are quite certain that this gospel, as we have it, is not an apostolic work. Witness, for example, the vague expressions, "their cities, their scribes," as if the writer in no way belonged to the country; witness, also, the references to a state of ecclesiastical life and doctrinal thought only developed at a much later day than that to which Matthew belonged.[1] That our gospel embodies these Aramaic "logia" as its germ, or original nucleus, is generally conceded, and it may be that the gospel owes its name to the presence of these logia within it. But it would be hazardous to say that Matthew, the disciple, was the original author of these "logia." The tradition that he wrote them may be due to the idea that he, as a publican, had literary ability. It was believed that Matthew had a clerkship in the custom house at Capernaum. But there is no valid evidence for the belief that a tax-gatherer, an agent of the Roman government, was a disciple of Jesus. In view of the strong public sentiment against publicans as a class, it would have been most imprudent for Jesus to have selected one of them for a disciple, however kindly and sympathetic his attitude to them

[1] See, 10:38; 28:15, 19; 18:17, 5, 11—all of which are indications of a late date.

might have been.[1] Be this as it may, additions were gradually made to this collection of logia and all finally gathered and recast, by an editorial hand, into the gospel as we now have it. Concerning the gospel according to Mark, Papias makes this statement: "Mark, as the interpreter of Peter, wrote down exactly, but not in order, all that Peter remembered of what Jesus had said or done. For Mark had neither heard the Lord nor followed Him, but afterward he followed Peter, who discoursed as need arose, but not as if he intended to give an orderly collection of the Lord's sayings. Furthermore, Mark took care to omit nothing he had heard, and to write nothing false." Just how Peter's reminiscences were shaped into our Gospel of Mark we cannot tell. On the other hand, it is quite clear that this Proto-Mark and our Gospel are not identical. This is proved, above all, by the very obvious order in which the events are related. Again, the writer furnishes explanations of all the Aramaic terms he uses, thus creating the irresistible impression that he is

[1] In Mark 2:14 we read of one Levi, a tax-gatherer, whom Jesus invited to come to his house. The writer of the Gospel of Matthew, it would seem, construed this invitation as meaning an invitation to discipleship. Hence in 10:3 we have Matthew substituted for Levi.

writing for non-Jewish readers. Moreover, his gospel contains a number of Latin expressions, such as "centurion" and "procurator," suggesting Rome as the possible place whence it came.

Besides these two earliest known attempts at committing the oral tradition to writing—the logia of Matthew and Peter's recollections as recorded by Mark—we have to note also the attempts referred to in the preface to Luke's gospel. Here we read that many persons tried their hand at writing out the oral tradition and with varying degrees of skill; that their work was often incomplete, inaccurate or lacking in proper arrangement of the material; that consequently Luke felt impelled to sift the imperfect records and draft a complete, accurate and orderly story of Jesus' life and work. The precise words of the preface are these: "For as much as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us, who, from the beginning, were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word; it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee, in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the cer-

tainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed."

That Matthew and Luke both drew on Mark for material is obvious to even the most casual reader of their gospels. Yet there are one hundred and eighty verses in the gospels of Matthew and Luke, which have no parallel in Mark's gospel. And here the resemblances are such as to compel belief in a single source for the material common to Matthew and Luke, but not found in Mark. To this common source the appellation "Q" has been given—from the German, *Quelle,* signifying source. Of "Q" we know nothing. Prof. Harnack, it is true, holds that in the "logia" referred to by Papias we may recognize Q.[1] But to this view valid objections have been raised which we cannot now discuss. Indeed, our digression has already exceeded the normal limit, and we must return at once to the rise of the New Testament as a canonical work. Had no other books than the twenty-seven composing the New Testament come into existence, and with a claim to recognition as of equal worth, the task of making a collection of sacred scriptures would have been easy enough. But during New Testament times a mass of ethical

[1] A. Harnack: Sayings of Jesus. Crown Library.

and religious literature was produced, all in the wake of that missionary enterprise which carried the gospel from the Jordan to the Euphrates, and from the Rhone to the Nile, and established preachers in all the leading cities of this area. Some of these preachers wrote sermons, others attempted to show forth the superiority of Christianity to the popular cults, or to translate the gospel into the language of Greek speculation. Still others there were who found in the martyrdoms of the faithful, victims of cruel and false charges, a subject for inspiring romance. And some there were who devoted their literary ability to the production of moral and spiritual brochures intended to stem the tide of immorality that was steadily engulfing the Græco-Roman civilization of the period. Thus it was that the religious and social situation in the first and second century called forth a number and variety of literary products. And they included all four of the types represented in the New Testament—*Gospels,* such as those according to the Egyptians, according to the Hebrews, according to Peter; *Epistles,* such as those of Clement, Barnabas; *Acts,* such as those of Paul and Tecla, of Andrew and of Bartholomew; *Apocalypses,* such as those of Peter and of

James. Add to these the many *apologia,* or defences of Christianity against the objections raised by Jewish and Gentile critics, such as "The Dialogue with Trypho the Jew," written by Justin the Martyr. Add, also, the *refutations* of heresies, such as were written by Irenæus; the *manuals* of ecclesiastical discipline and ritual, like the "Didache." In other words, by the year 150 a great mass of Christian literature had been published, out of which the New Testament books were eventually chosen.

What object was there in making such a collection? When was the issue finally settled as to which books should be included? What were the standards that determined the choice? Let us address ourselves to each of these questions in turn.

As long as men had Jesus among them no one felt the need of adding any scriptures to the Old Testament collection. He was their authority. After his death it was the oral tradition of his words. But in time it became evident that the sense of certitude attaching to these oral reports would vanish and no one would be present who could testify to the correctness of what was quoted. It is to this time that we go back in tracing the rise of the New Testament canon; a

time when the twenty-seven books of the New Testament were not yet set apart from the mass of literature as "scriptures"; when the Old Testament was not yet called "Old" because it was the only extant Testament; a time when the bond of union in the Christian Church was not a creed, nor a book, nor a formula, but simply following Jesus; when, transcending all thoughts of church organization, ritual and doctrine, the belief in the speedy return of Jesus preoccupied Christian attention; a time when the idea of a *canon* of scripture had not yet taken definite hold of Christian minds. What, then, were the causes that led to the formation of the New Testament canon? We may divide them conveniently into two groups, the one dealing with those causes that were direct and external; the other concerned with those that were indirect and internal. Under the former group must be included, first, the experience of missionaries, who, in their preaching, appealed for authority to books not universally recognized as worthy to be quoted. The Epistle of Barnabas, for example, acknowledged as authoritative by one community, was not so considered by another. In other words, Christianity had no scriptures of its own, corresponding to the Old

Testament of Judaism, and practical experience in the work of making converts proved the imperative necessity of having a canon or authoritative standard to which all preachers should alike appeal for the successful propagation of the new religion.

A second direct and external cause for the instituting of such a scriptural authority was the rise of rival sects which sought to appropriate Jesus and his message for the advancement of their own conflicting views. Early in the second century a number of religious movements had sprung into existence, all of them, in their respective claims, rivaling Christianity. The two most important of these were Gnosticism and Montanism. Both originated in Asia Minor, and both found their way to Alexandria, Rome, Lyons and other leading centers of Western Christianity, threatening the very life of the infant Church. Gnosticism derived its name from the insistence on *gnosis,* or *knowledge,* which was the dominant note in its teaching and which meant initiation into the "secret of deliverance from the lower world of matter" wherein all human souls have become entangled. Knowledge of the mystic, divine plan was the key to this deliverance. Gnosticism being con-

cerned with a metaphysical conception of redemption (from the lower status of man's natural life) stood in direct opposition to the Christian conception which was fundamentally ethical, relating directly to release from sin. A religio-philosophical speculation, Gnosticism sought to give sanction to the notion that Jesus had committed secret knowledge to certain of his disciples and that this esoteric tradition differed from the exoteric knowledge circulated throughout the Christian Church. Conspicuous among the representatives of this sect was Marcion, a wealthy ship-builder, who, about the year 140, came from the borders of the Black Sea to Rome, and there founded a Marcionite Church, the canonical scriptures of which included a modified edition of the Epistles of Paul and the Gospel of Luke, recast to suit the peculiar claims of the sect. This falsifying and interpolating of Christian documents to support a *gnosis,* or secret knowledge, as against the simple faith for which Christianity stood, brought on a fierce conflict between Marcion and leaders of the Christian Church, making it apparent to the latter that a canon of Christian scriptures was an immediate necessity.

Contemporary with Gnosticism was Montan-

ism, owing its name to one Montanus, a Phrygian, who claimed to be the "Paraclete" or Comforter which (according to the Fourth Gospel) Jesus promised to send to his disciples as his abiding presence among them.[1] Montanus professed to be perfect and exhorted his hearers to be perfect, holding that the final act in the drama of redemption was about to be enacted at Pepusa, a village of Phrygia. There the new Jerusalem would come down from heaven and be the permanent abode of the saved. To support his thesis, Montanus made use of the Fourth Gospel, but having no canon of scriptures to which his own inspirations could be referred, these were promptly put on a par with the gospel, to be regarded as divine revelations. To counteract so bold a claim, however sincerely made; to demonstrate that the age of revelation had gone by, and to refute the notion that any authority attached to these wild and wandering "inspirations" embodied in preaching of the Millerite type, it was felt that the one thing needful was the immediate formation of a New Testament canon. In other words, the extravagant and fictitious claims of Gnosticism and Montanism drove orthodox Christians

[1] John 15:26.

in the second century to a consolidation of sentiment as to what were the accredited documents of their religion and the resulting product was the formation of a New Testament canon.

Coming now to the second group of causes, the indirect and internal causes that led to the adoption of a scriptural canon, we take account of a succession of agencies that were at work *within the Church itself* and that would certainly have compelled the formation of a canon, even had there been no external causes in operation pointing to this end. Deep below the surface of the conflict with Gnosticism and Montanism there were conditions and controversies within Christianity that acted as all-sufficient causes for the establishment of a documentary authority on all questions of faith and practice.

Consider, for example, that question of ecclesiastical order which occasionally crops up in our own day and which was a burning issue in the second century, the question of scripture selections for reading at the Sunday services. Then, as now, there were ministers who took liberties with this element of ritual observance, and then, as now, it was felt that a line must be drawn between what shall be regarded as "regular" and "irregular" in this matter of pub-

lic readings at church services. In the early Christian Church it had long been unsettled what books should be read from the pulpit. Agreement had to be reached because of the frequency of pulpit exchanges and the lively intercourse among the churches generally. The visiting clergyman from an eastern church conducting the service in a western church might introduce scripture selections not approved by its members. Here, then, was a liturgical reason for deciding upon a canon of scriptures. Or, consider the widespread need for defending Christianity against the attacks of Jewish and Gentile critics and persecutors. Or, take again, the passion for proving Christianity superior to its rivals, as we see it in the writings of Justin and Irenæus, and we are confronted with a religious situation that throws further light on the rise of the New Testament canon. These men in their apologetic and educational work made constant use of Christian documents. Yet they held divergent views as to which books should be considered authoritative. Hence, to meet the need created by this situation, to insure uniformity on the part of all apologists and instructors seeking to define Christianity and set forth its requirements, the formation of a

canon of scripture became an absolute necessity.

A third cause for fixing such a body of scripture, and one which, like the preceding causes, arose within the Church, was the absorption of interest in missionary expansion and the consequent loss of intensive development, threatening dissolution of the churches. Imperative it was that along with the process of expansion there should go, *pari passu,* the process of unification. Were the separate churches, whose number was steadily increasing, to hold diverse views on questions of doctrine, ritual and government, disintegration would inevitably set in and Christianity soon disappear. Well enough to aim at the spread of the new religion, but its very life was conditioned by agreement among all the scattered churches as to what it stood for, or in which scriptures Christian doctrine, ritual and rules of ecclesiastical government are authoritatively presented. Nor is the statement at all extravagant that what saved expanding Christianity from impending collapse was the unification brought about by the formation of a canon of scripture. Quite apart, then, from the struggle with rival and heretical sects which precipitated a crisis and constituted the direct and external cause for the adop-

tion of a scriptural canon, there existed these internal conditions, within the Church itself, and which, though acting only as indirect causes, were yet of themselves sufficient to compel the establishment of a canon and thereby crush out the rivals of Christianity.

Our next question is, when was the canon formed? Only after protracted and heated controversy. There were those who, like Papias, had "heard the words of the Lord" from persons who had conversed with Him, and this oral tradition was more precious to them than any written record. Over against these conservatives stood men like Ignatius, who complained that the written word is not universally acknowledged. In one of his letters Ignatius wrote: "I beseech you, brethren, to avoid strife. For I have heard some say that if they do not find a precept in the Old Testament that is recorded in the gospels they will not accept it. And when I replied, 'It is written,' they answered, 'That is just the question.'" Thus, in the first half of the second century there were Christians hostile to any effort that would detract from the authoritative place which the Old Testament held. But when, in the next generation, Justin declared that the gospels are read universally through-

out the Christian Church, that "they belong to our writings" and are quoted with the formula *"it is written,"* the struggle for recognition of the gospels as canonical was over. The only question that remained concerned limiting their number to four. And for this achievement Irenæus, who flourished about the year 180, must be credited. He settled the issue in terms of the following argument:

"It is not possible that the gospels can be either more or fewer than they are. For since there are four zones of the world in which we live, and four principal winds (*τέσσαρα καθολικὰ πνεύματα*), while the Church is scattered throughout all the world, and the 'pillar and ground' (I Tim. 3:15) of the Church is the Gospel and the Spirit of Life; it is fitting that she should have four pillars, breathing out immortality on every side and vivifying men afresh. From which fact it is evident that the Word, the Artificer of all, He that sitteth upon the cherubim and contains all things, He who was manifested to man, has given us the Gospel under four aspects, but bound together by one Spirit. As also David says, when entreating his manifestation, 'Thou that sittest between cherubim, shine forth.' (Ps. 80:1.) For the cher-

ubim, too, were four-faced, and their faces were images of the dispensation of the Son of God."

"And such as was the form of the living creatures, so was also the character of the Gospel. For the living creatures are quadriform, and the Gospel is quadriform, as is also the course followed by the Lord. For this reason were four principal (καδολικαι) covenants given to the human race—one, prior to the deluge, under Adam; the second, that after the deluge, under Noah; the third, the giving of the law, under Moses; the fourth, that which renovates man, and sums up all things in itself by means of the Gospel, raising and bearing men on its wings (the eagle) into the heavenly kingdom.

"These things being so, all who destroy the form of the Gospel are vain, unlearned and also audacious."[1]

The canonicity of the four gospels settled, there arose the question of attitude to other productions, such as the letters of Paul and other epistolary literature of the first century which breathed the spirit of Jesus. Apocalypses, too, there were and short histories of Christianity from its foundation; on these sentence must be

[1] Irenæus: "Against Heresies," Bk. III, Chap. XI.

passed from the standpoint of canonical worth. How could Paul's letters be left out from any authoritative list of scriptures, seeing the invaluable services he had rendered in organizing the Christian religion. Were there not also other letters, bearing apostolic names—Peter, James and John—and should not these be included in the canon? How was it that of all the letters that did not bear Paul's name only seven were canonized, and these only after considerable debate, as the writings of early Christian Fathers testify? As for the one Apocalypse included in the New Testament collection, its right to be there was long and bitterly contested, even after the canon was closed.

What, then, in conclusion, was the principle that determined the choice of books for the canon? The answer is, apostolic origin. Yet how loosely was this principle applied! For even Paul's letters could not be strictly regarded as apostolic, he having been "accepted" as an apostle by Peter, James and John when he came, a convert, to Jerusalem, where they were engaged in supervising the missionary work committed to their trust.[1] Similarly, the gospels of Luke and Mark were open to the same objection.

[1] Acts 13: 2; 15: 22; 21: 18.

They could be construed as of apostolic origin only in the sense that "Mark was the interpreter of Peter," [1] and Luke the companion of Paul.[2]

The Book of Acts, too, gained admission to the canon on the ground that it reported the labors of apostles, though not itself of apostolic origin. The so-called "Pastoral" epistles of Timothy and Titus owed their place in the canon to the fact that they strengthened the hierarchy which rooted itself in the apostles. So, again, the Apocalypse escaped exclusion in that it was known as "The Revelation of St. John the Divine." Far, then, from being a mere accumulation, the New Testament canon was the product of a process of selection, and many a dearly loved, devoutly cherished book, like the Epistle of Barnabas, the Shepherd of Hermas or the Didache, had to forego inclusion because it bore no apostolic name, or because its contents stood in no recognized apostolic relation.

In the gradual process of canonization three distinct periods can be discerned. The first, extending to the middle of the second century (130), is that in which the gospels have their influence and weight as vehicles of Jesus'

[1] Peter. 5:13. [2] Col. 4:14.

teaching and the epistles of Paul have their measure of reverence and appeal as writings of the Apostle to the Gentiles. But in the case of neither gospels nor epistles was there. in this first period, any thought of a canon, to be placed alongside the Old Testament. The second period extends from the middle of the second century through the thirty years that followed, when, under pressure from without and within the Church, the thought of a canon took strong and irresistible hold. The third period, covering nearly two and a half centuries, is that in which the idea of a canon is definitely fixed and the limits of its application are slowly determined. To this period, therefore, belongs the fragment of the "Muratori" canon, discovered by Signor Muratori, librarian of Milan in 1740. According to this fragment, which dates from the third quarter of the second century, the Christian scriptures consisted of the four gospels and a group of thirteen epistles. Twenty-five years later, Origen described the collection as including gospels, epistles and the Apocalypse. Thus, in this period, the idea of Christianity having a volume of sacred writings of its own becomes universally accepted and all doubts as to the admissibility of certain books are gradually re-

moved from both the Eastern and Western Church. Just here it may be well to recall the fact that the Holy Catholic Church remained united till the year 589, when, at a *non-œcumenical* council, held in Toledo, Spain, there was *un*authoritatively added the clause "and the Son" (*filioque*) to the third section of the Nicene creed: "I believe in the Holy Ghost which proceedeth from the Father and the Son." Against this insertion the Eastern Church rebelled as an heretical addition, and contrary to the true doctrine of the Trinity as formulated at Nicæa in 323. Prolonged dissension followed, till finally, in 1054, Leo IX excommunicated the Eastern Church. Since that date the severed parts of the Holy Catholic Church—Greek and Roman—have had independent existence and separate government.

The greatest single influence in securing a settlement of the "canon" was undoubtedly that of Augustine, bishop of Hippo during the first quarter of the fifth century and leading representative of the Western Church. It was at his instigation that (1) the twenty-seven books composing the New Testament were set apart from the mass of more or less authoritative literature and (2) at the Councils of Carthage in 397 and in

419 they were pronounced scripture and (3) public reading of other books was prohibited on pain of excommunication. No such conciliar action was ever taken by the Eastern Church. Athanasius, in his Easter letter to the Church at Alexandria in 367, had practically fixed the canon of twenty-seven books, though this was never ratified by any Eastern Council. Hence it happens that the Eastern, or Greek, Church still remains noncommittal on the question, though adhering to the Athanasian decision. And this decision Augustine accepted, successfully recommending to the Carthaginian councils the adoption of the Athanasian canon. Finally in 495, by a decree of Pope Gelasius, this same canon was formally and authoritatively declared to be the canon of the New Testament.

II

THE RELIABILITY OF THE RECORD

The earliest extant manuscript of the New Testament is written in Greek. But Jesus and his Palestinian contemporaries spoke Aramaic and it may fairly be doubted if the Greek language was known to Jesus and his disciples. As for Hebrew, in which the ancient law, the discourses of the prophets and the traditions of the nation had been written, this had ceased to be commonly spoken in Jesus' day, except by members of the Rabbinical schools. Hebrew was particularly the language of religion. In it hymns were composed and chronicles written, but it was by no means generally understood. Even in the synagogues it was necessary, when the Scriptures were read, to have them translated, verse by verse, into the vernacular of the people. That this was Aramaic can scarcely be

doubted. For, in the first two gospels a number of words are found which, even through their Greek spelling, show us that Aramaic was the language spoken by Jesus and his followers.[1] Add to this evidence the testimony of the author of the first chapter of Acts (I:19) who uses the expression, "in the language of the dwellers in Jerusalem," when stating the name by which the field in which Judas was buried, "Akeldama," was known. As evidencing the general lack of acquaintance with Greek we have only to recall the Talmudic sentiment, "Cursed be he who teaches his child Greek" and the deeply rooted prejudice against all things Greek, generated in Hebrew hearts through three centuries of subjugation and oppression under Greek rule. Furthermore, we have the testimony of Josephus, to the effect that he found great difficulty in mastering Greek sufficiently well to write his books in that language. When, therefore, the gospel tradition was first given currency in Palestine, it was not in Greek but in Aramaic; and in the latter language not even a fragment of gospel-literature is known to us.

[1] See Matt. 5:22; 6:24; Mark 5:41; 14:36; Matt. 16:17; 27:46. Compare Matt. 26:73 which points to the difficulty of pronouncing gutturals, experienced by Galileans.

Jesus left to posterity no written record of his own. The sole instance of his having recorded anything is reported in the eighth chapter of the Fourth Gospel. Here is an interpolated story of a conversation of Jesus with an adulteress, according to which, when her accusers slunk away under his stinging rebuke, "Let him that is without sin cast the first stone," Jesus "stooped down and wrote with his finger upon the ground." But what he wrote vanished in the moment of its appearance.

Socrates had his Xenophon to jot down "memorabilia" of the master. Mohammed bequeathed to his followers "revelations" which, after his death, were edited by his dearest disciple, Abu-Bekr and since known as the "Qu'ran." But Jesus, like Gotama the Buddha, was content with "speaking the word." His disciples were chiefly fishermen and peasants and from them no literary impulse could have originated.

Shortly after his death they returned to Jerusalem from Galilee, whither they had fled when he was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane. Then it was that oral tradition of his life and ministry began to take shape; and it

was transmitted solely by word of mouth from disciple to convert, year after year, for at least a decade. One would naturally suppose that so precious a tradition would have been committed to writing in the very year of the crucifixion and that delay would have been deemed an unpardonable sin. But the truth is, that, conservatively estimated, an interval of not less than ten years elapsed before *written* transmission of the gospels began. Just when the gospel-story first appeared in manuscript we cannot tell. The earliest of the four gospels as we now have it, was not written before 70 A.D., whereas several of Paul's epistles had appeared twenty years earlier. Yet in none of these are *written* gospels mentioned, neither is the existence of such presupposed. Nor again, in any other epistles of the first half of the first century, whether within or without the New Testament canon, is there any reference to written gospels. Incidentally, it may be noted that the theory, broached by Bruno Bauer, to the effect that a creative writer freely composed the entire record without any previous oral currency, is altogether fanciful and has never secured scholarly support.

Why then, it will be asked, should a period of

ten or more years have been allowed to elapse before any data concerning Jesus were committed to writing? The immediate reason was that all his followers believed he would very soon return from heaven to earth and fulfil the function of Messiah. We shall have occasion to dwell on this belief at greater length in a later lecture, and so need note only the bearing of the belief on the lack of any *written* records concerning Jesus at this time. Living in hourly expectation of the return of Jesus from heaven, what interest could there be in the preparation of his biography? Better employ what little time remains to saving sinners from the impending doom that awaits the unrepentant and fitting them for membership in the new social order which Messiah-Jesus would soon inaugurate, than make literary provision for a future that will have no use for it. Such was the point of view which the *Parousia* or "coming of the Lord" produced, such the vital and practical issue that confronted the followers of Jesus in the first years of their life without him. Here, then, is the primary reason for the failure to write an account of Jesus and his work. There was no occasion for more than *oral* transmission of what was known. A further rea-

son for adherence to the oral method is seen in the acknowledged superiority of the voice to the pen as an effective instrument for communicating to poor and illiterate people the story of Jesus' life and gospel. And this class of society was the first to respond to his message, a people who could have neither purchased nor read manuscripts, had they been furnished. Moreover, it was a long-established Jewish custom to transmit the accumulated store of learning orally. That mass of exposition and commentary on the Pentateuch, known as the Talmud, had been handed down by word of mouth for two hundred years. The rabbis indeed, forbade committing it to writing and only after the final overthrow of Jewish national hope, at the end of the second century, was the prohibition annulled. The self-same method of transmission obtained among the ancient Hindus and Buddhists, though with this important difference, that whereas these people possessed a fixed deposit of teaching to be handed down and employed *trained* repeaters for the work of transmission, the gospel-story was still in the making and the men who formed it, far from being trained, came directly from the water-front and the market-place. Even to this day,

in Jerusalem, on the very site of Solomon's temple, Mohammedans may be seen teaching the illiterate the Qu'ran by the same repetitive process as of old. Before leaving the question of oral transmission as precursor of the written word, the testimony of the Apostle Paul must be recalled. In his letter to the converts at Corinth, he urges them to "hold fast to the traditions" and when he enumerates the various "gifts" to be prized, he mentions among others, teaching, healing, speaking with tongues; but not a word does he say of writing as one of these gifts. His omission of it would seem to indicate the absence of any literary activity among the immediate followers of Jesus.

Assuredly in the first half of the first century, no one had dreamed of adding a new series of scriptures to the Old Testament, nor even of drawing up a formal "life of Jesus." What then caused the precious tradition to be committed to writing? First, the non-fulfilment of the Messianic expectation. Jesus did not return to earth. In the third gospel we find repeated reference to delay in Messiah's coming. It found expression in the parable of the unjust judge[1] and in the story of the nobleman who went

[1] Luke 18:1–8.

away to a distant land to "receive for himself a kingdom *and return.*" [1] The sense of disappointment appears again in the words: "We trusted that it had been he who should redeem Israel." [2] And in the Second Epistle of Peter, latest of the New Testament books, written about the year 150 A.D., we find the faithful confronted with the question of scoffers: "*Where* is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things remain as they were from the beginning." Thus under the stress of disappointment and misgiving as to Jesus' return, there arose the spontaneous impulse to write down what could be remembered of his teaching and life.

A further reason for committal of the gospel to writing was the extension of missionary preaching beyond Palestine, among peoples who knew little, if anything, of Jesus and his message. Such scanty information as they would receive from itinerant preachers would make the possession of some permanent memorial eminently desirable, so that it might be studied and memorized. We have a hint of this in the preface to Luke's gospel. He refers to various attempts that were made to reduce the oral

[1] Luke 19:11, 12. [2] Luke 24:21.

tradition to writing but as these were defective, the author proposes to "set in order and accurately" for the sake of the convert Theophilus, (to confirm him in his newly accepted faith) all that had been handed down from apostolic eye and earwitnesses.

Once more, successive persecutions of the infant Church, followed by flight of the members from Jerusalem and finally leaving the infant Church without a rallying center, these experiences made it imperative to have an authoritative written record of the gospel, precisely as the deportation of the Jews from Jerusalem to Babylon, in the days of Nebuchadrezzar, gave rise to the need of *written* law and history to serve as a standard round which the exiled people of Yahweh might rally.

Still one other reason must be noted for conversion of the oral tradition into written form. The rapid growth of the infant Church, increasing from the one hundred and twenty who constituted the original community in Jerusalem, to several thousand[1] would, of necessity, call for teaching-material that could be used in missionary work by men who had neither seen nor heard Jesus and for whom, under the circum-

[1] Acts 1:15; 2:41; 4:4.

stances, anything like vocational training was impossible. The primitive written forms which the first three gospels assumed furnished such teaching-material. But even when the oral tradition had thus acquired its incipient literary form, no one single composition would have embodied all the data in circulation among the churches. Various editions of the gospel-story must have been published, differing in substance and in style, the precursors of our first three gospels, in which we note not only such differences but also the absence of certain sayings of Jesus found elsewhere. It is, for example, in the report of Paul's speech to the elders at Ephesus,[1] and nowhere in the gospels, that we find a quotation from Jesus, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Similarly, in the works of other early Christian writers, we meet with a number of sayings of Jesus not included in any of the gospel-biographies, witness, for example, the following: "Because of the weak I became weak and because of the hungry I became hungered." "They who would enter my Kingdom must lay hold of me through anguish and suffering." "If ye be gathered unto me and keep not the commandments, I will put

[1] Acts 20: 35.

you away, saying, depart from me ye who work iniquity."

The gospels, then, as they have come down to us, are not verbatim reports, nor were their authors personally acquainted with Jesus. Rather are the gospels the net result of a complex process, the genesis of which we can trace as far back as the crucifixion. And the culmination of that process was the recognition of these gospels as scripture, as part of the New Testament canon—the sole and final authoritative source of information concerning Jesus and his gospel. Clearly, then, we must not think of the gospels as literary *units*, but as literary aggregations. They "grew as grows the grass," taking up into themselves ingredients from the soil and atmosphere. For, many influences were at work in the first century to color, enlarge and distort the tradition. There was, for example, the belief that Jesus was the Messiah, the mould in which the synoptic biographies were shaped. There existed also the belief that the Hebrew prophets had foretold every detail concerning Messiah-Jesus' life. Hence the spontaneous turning to the Old Testament for prophetic confirmation of reported incidents and deeds as well as for data to supply what was lacking

in the tradition. Again, there existed intense admiration and reverence for the person of Jesus, sentiments that gained in strength and depth with the passing of the years and that did their part in amplifying and modifying the original tradition. It would carry us too far afield to enter upon a detailed discussion and illustration of these and other agencies that operated to give the gospels the final form they assumed as part of the New Testament. Suffice it simply to bear in mind the fact that there were such influences at work and to ask whether or not we are to see in them indications of the unreliability of the gospel-record. For, I take it, that the two facts already noted, first, the prolonged oral transmission of the tradition prior to its committal to writing, and second, the lack on the part of Jesus' followers of such safeguards as were employed by the early Aryans for the accurate preservation of their sacred books, to guarantee correct transmission of their Master's message, these facts cannot but have roused suspicion as to the reliability of the gospel-record. And our sense of distrust deepens when we recall what occurred in the process of successive copyings of the original record, not to mention the translation from Ara-

maic into Greek when this was called for. Even the best-intentioned scribes made mistakes. One has only to attempt the copying of a modern manuscript to realize what the chances of error in the transcription are. Even so careful and painstaking a copyist as Tischendorf discovered he had made a number of mistakes when he compared his copy of certain leaves of the Sinaitic manuscript with the original. And the scribes who wrote that manuscript were considerably more handicapped than is the copyist of a modern manuscript. For, as I observed in my recent inspection and study of the "Codex Sinaiticus" in the imperial library of St. Petersburg, the oldest extant manuscript of the New Testament, there is no spacing either between the words of a sentence, or between the sentences; no division of the text into verses or paragraphs, simply a continuous stream of letters, with frequent contractions of words, making accurate transcription all the more difficult.

Add to accidental errors of the copyist changes or additions intentionally introduced into the text (for reasons we cannot now discuss) and the doubt with which our study began deepens still more. The margin of the Revised Version of the New Testament supplies the

reader with a goodly number of such intentional additions to the record. Occasionally the insertions were on a very liberal scale; witness the section, John 7:53–8:11; the "appendix" to the Gospel of Mark (16:9-20); the "doxology" at the close of the Lord's Prayer (Matt. 6:13); the words of Jesus on the cross, as reported in Luke's gospel (23:35). And when, in addition to these causes of misgiving as to the reliability of the record, we learn that in the three thousand extant manuscripts of the New Testament there are one hundred and fifty thousand cases of variation in the text, we instinctively grow alarmed and feel that the last thread in our cord of confidence has been broken. But it behooves us to beware of misconstruing the significance of these disquieting discoveries. Consider, for example, these hundred and fifty thousand variants in three thousand manuscripts. Taken at its face value the fact of these differences tends, not merely to shake, but positively to shatter our confidence in the record. But, when we come to closer quarters with it, we find that this immense number of variants is largely due to the difficulty of copying an entire manuscript without blunders. Hence the cases of really vital variation are

comparatively few. It has been suggested that it would be an immense advantage had we only one manuscript of the New Testament to consult; but the truth is that, far from being a boon, it would be most unfortunate and deplorable to be thus restricted. For no matter which the sole manuscript in our possession be, we are certain it contains errors, and we should be totally at a loss to determine where they are had we only this one text. Given a large number of manuscripts and we are in a position to locate scribal errors. For many of the transcripts will be right where one is wrong, simply because it very rarely happens that two or more scribes make precisely the same mistake in their copying. Let me take an old illustration to make this truth clear. Suppose we have one hundred manuscripts of the Gospel of Mark, each written independently of the other. Suppose each manuscript has ten accidental blunders, and hence different in each copy. If, now, we consult only one manuscript, we shall have a text with ten unknown errors in it. Take a second manuscript and we have twenty various readings in all, the true reading being in one or the other. Take a third manuscript, and we have thirty various read-

ings. But the probability is that two of these manuscripts will agree as against the third. Take a hundred manuscripts, and we have a thousand various readings. Yet, in the case of any one passage, ninety-nine will have the same reading and the variation visible in the hundredth will be a blunder. Hence the possession of a large number of manuscripts is a decided advantage. Nay more, our waning confidence in the record begins to regain its strength when we apply this illustration to the texts of the New Testament. Thanks to the labors of Professors Westcott and Hort and the late lamented von Soden—scholars who have specialized in this field of investigation—we now know that seven-eighths of the total various readings are of altogether minor importance, having only orthographic or verbal significance, while but one-eighth concerns differences of real importance, involving some forty passages in all. Commenting upon the ratio of these variants to the rest of the text, Dr. Hort remarked that, if we imagine the New Testament to consist of five hundred pages, the various readings that relate to points of vital consequence would occupy not more than half a page.

First, then, among the sources calculated to inspire confidence in the gospel-record is this remarkable result of the comparative study of extant manuscripts.

It strengthens our confidence still more when we find words and phrases preserved in the vernacular of Palestine, the Aramaic of Jesus' day, expressions that could not have been invented by Greek-speaking writers but were transmitted direct and unaltered from the living memory of disciples. Recall, for instance,[1] *Raca,* "thou empty-headed one"; *Mammon,* "wealth"; *Talitha cumi,* "maiden arise"; *Abba,* "father"; *Eli, Eli, lama sabachthâni,* "my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Aramaic scholars tell us that the names in the Gospels beginning with *Bar,* such as Barabbas, Bar-Jona, Bartholomew, are all Aramaic names. Moreover, it has been observed that in the Greek version of the gospels there are idiomatic Aramaic phrases, and the fact that these can be translated back into the original goes far toward establishing their genuineness. Again, it is significant that, when Jesus quoted from the Old Testament "Law and Prophets," it was invariably from the Palestinian Hebrew, not the

[1] Matt. 5:22; 6:24; Mark 5:41; 14:36; Matt. 27:46.

Alexandrian Greek Version, or Septuagint. If any of these quotations should agree with the Greek version as against the Hebrew, suspicion would be cast upon its genuineness.[1] In the synagogue of Jesus' day the Hebrew Old Testament was read and then paraphrased in Aramaic, sentence by sentence, for the benefit of the audience. The Septuagint version, which dates from the year 275 B.C., found no favor in Palestinian circles where the standard of canonical scriptures was stricter than at Alexandria and where Greek was not the language of the people. Finding, then, that quoted sentences from the Old Testament in the gospels have a *Palestinian* original gives additional strength to our confidence in the record. It is noteworthy, too, in this connection, that all the characteristic ideas in the Synoptic Gospels are essentially Jewish. There is a conspicuous absence of Greek ideas. The Messiah, the kingdom of heaven, a day of judgment followed by the meting out of rewards, and punishments—these are quite foreign to Greek thought. Were we to find any one of them associated with a Greek idea, it would instantly rouse suspicion as to its genuineness. Prof. Burkitt cites an interesting ex-

[1] cf. Luke 22:35–7 with Hos. 6:6.

ample of such association. The saying, "Lo, the kingdom of heaven is in your midst," appears in a Greek-Egyptian fragment, coupled with the Delphic maxim, "Know thyself," whereas in Luke's gospel it stands in immediate connection with the speedy coming of the kingdom, a characteristic Jewish idea. And this latter association testifies to the genuineness of the saying as against what we read in the Egyptian version.

Again, when we compare the three earliest extant manuscripts of the New Testament with one another—the Sinaitic, the Vatican and the Alexandrian, the first two dating from the middle of the fourth century (350) and the third from the fifth century (450)—we observe a remarkable measure of agreement in their readings throughout. The footnotes to Tischendorf's edition of the New Testament[1] afford striking illustration of this general unity of version and it contributes in no small degree to our confidence in the record. None of these manuscripts were known to the translators of the King James, or "Authorized" version of 1611; yet such was their importance as a means of bringing us closer to the original text that in

[1] Tauchnitz Library, Volume 1,000.

1885 a "Revised" version was published correcting many an error by reference to the readings found in these earliest extant manuscripts.

Compare, further, the reading in these with what we find in Papyri fragments, also written in Greek, but antedating them by a hundred years, and we see new and striking resemblances that inspire still more confidence in the reliability of the record. Turn, for example, to that eleventh leaf of a Greek papyrus manuscript, discovered in 1897 at Oxyrhyncus (the modern Behnesa.) A relic it is of the oral gospel-tradition in its earliest written form. This leaf contains the following sayings, or "logia," of Jesus, three of which, it will be observed, tally with what we read in the gospels:

1. .....and thou shalt see clearly to cast out the mote that is in thy brother's eye (fragmentary).
2. Jesus saith, Except ye fast to the world, ye shall in nowise find the kingdom of God; and except ye keep the Sabbath, ye shall not see the Father.
3. Jesus saith, I stood in the midst of the world, and in the flesh was I seen of them, and I found all men drunken, and none

found I athirst among them, and my soul grieveth over the sons of men, because they are blind in their heart..... (fragmentary).

4. .....poverty.....(fragmentary).
5. Jesus saith, Wherever there are.....and there is one alone, I am with him. Raise the stone, and there thou shalt find me, cleave the wood, and there am I (fragmentary).
6. Jesus saith, A prophet is not acceptable in his own country, neither doth a physician work cures upon them that know him.
7. Jesus saith, a city built upon the top of a high hill and stablished, can neither fall nor be hid.
8. Hearest with one ear.....

The first of these has its exact parallel in Luke 6:42. The first half of the sixth has its equivalent in Luke 4:24. The seventh is quite like what we read in Matt. 5:14. The remaining five represent additions to the synoptic tradition, taking their place in the same class as that saying quoted by the apostle Paul, to which reference has already been made. The second of these "logia" (and they are not to be

confused with those referred to by Papias which were written in Aramaic) is a supplement to the injunctions recorded in Matt. 6:16-18 and 9:14, 15. The third expresses that sorrow, which from gospel-sources we learn, Jesus felt on finding Pharisees unresponsive to his teaching. The fifth reminds us of the omnipresent Logos-Jesus of the Fourth Gospel and of its mysticism. The eighth provokes comparison with Mark 7:16; of which it may have been a variation. In so far, then, as we find in this papyrus fragment—older by a century than our oldest extant New Testament manuscript—phrases and sentences that parallel what we read in the gospels, they serve as a further justification of our confidence in the genuineness of the record.

Some fifty years before these "logia" were written, an unknown representative of the early Christian Church prepared a document known as the "Didache" or "Teaching of the Twelve Apostles." The original document, long since lost, was written about the year 150, the approximate date for the latest of the New Testament books. It was, moreover, cited by Clement of Alexandria as "scripture," i. e. he quoted from the Didache as he did from the gospels; in his time and place the work had

canonical authority, appearing as part of the New Testament along with the Epistle of Barnabas and the Shepherd of Hermas. In 1884 Bryennios, Metropolitan of Serræ in Mesopotamia, while browsing in the library of a monastery near Constantinople, discovered a copy of this document written in 1056 by one who signed himself, Leon, notary and sinner. Our interest in the Didache centers upon its first six sections which contain sentences that appear *in* the gospels but not *from* the gospels. No one can read these passages without seeing their value as attestations to the genuineness of the originals. And the Didache antedates the Sinaitic manuscript by two hundred years.

Contemporary with the publication of the Didache, possibly preceding it by a decade or two, was the appearance of the "Old Latin" and the "Syriac" versions of the New Testament. Tertullian, of Carthage, made mention and use of this Old Latin translation from the Greek, citing it in one of his "Defences" of Christianity, written about the year 180. The Syriac Version is best known to us through the "Diatesseron," or Harmony of the Gospels, prepared by Tatian, a Mesopotamian convert to Christianity residing in Rome while Tertullian was in Carthage.

Comparing these ancient versions with our oldest extant New Testament manuscript, we note anew the agreement so impressive in previous comparative studies and we recognize therein another link in the chain of reasons for believing in the reliability of the gospel-record.

Carrying our series of observations further back still, we enter the first century of our era to which the Christian Fathers, Justin, Papias, Polycarp, Ignatius and Clement belong. All were born prior to the year 100 A.D. and lived in widely separated parts of Christendom —Justin at Rome, Papias in Phrygia, Polycarp at Smyrna, Ignatius at Antioch, Clement at Rome. All alike devoted themselves to the pressing task of defending the new religion against the attacks of Jewish and Gentile antagonists. To this end they quoted freely and frequently the teachings of Jesus and from manuscripts older than any documents to which we have referred. Now when we compare their quotations, as they appear in the "Apologia," "Letters," and other books that have come down to us, with what we read in our "Authorized" version of the New Testament, or better still, with the corresponding passages in the Sinaitic and Vatican manuscripts, the measure of

agreement observed is such as to give us still more reason for belief in the reliability of the record.

Finally, mention must be made of the liturgical books or "Lectionaries," prepared for use at the services of Christian churches in the first century. These service-books contain many quotations from the New Testament; some, for instance, pertaining to the celebration of the Lord's Supper, others to the baptismal ceremony. Over one thousand manuscripts of these "Lectionaries" are known to exist. Hitherto, however, they have been but partially examined; yet so far has investigation proceeded as to reveal remarkable resemblance between the quoted passages and the New Testament text with which we are familiar.

Such, then, in brief, bare outline, is the cumulative argument in support of the reliability of the gospel-record. And the ultimate conclusion to which we are brought is that while we cannot tell with absolute certainty that Jesus spoke a single sentence in the exact form in which it has come down to us, nor that he did a single thing in precisely the way in which it has been narrated, yet in the light of the reasons adduced, we are warranted in believing that we

have approximately the apostolic originals. Moreover, while the Synoptics are like palimpsests, in which the original record of sayings and doings of Jesus has been often obscured by what has been written over it, yet we can penetrate beneath this exterior to the real Jesus and his message. And in the transmitted record generation after generation will find fuel for their altar-fires, available throughout all time.

III

FROM THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS TO THE CONVERSION OF PAUL

It is quite clear from a study of the Synoptic Gospels that Jesus had no thought of instituting a new religion or of establishing a church. One passage, however, there is, which seems to contradict this conclusion. It is the famous passage in the sixteenth chapter of Matthew's gospel which reads as follows: "Thou art Peter and upon this rock will I build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven and whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth shall be bound in heaven and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

Is this a genuine utterance of Jesus, or must it be discredited? We may sum up the argument against its genuineness under the follow-

ing heads: (1) The passage appears not in the Synoptics but only in the gospel of Matthew; and this one, more than either of the others, reflects the conditions of a later day.[1] (2) The surname "Peter" was conferred upon Simon quite early in Jesus' ministry, according to Mark's gospel.[2] (3) The prerogative here bestowed upon Peter is abrogated in the next chapter, i. e., all twelve of the disciples are given authority "to bind and to loose"—albeit the very idea of a non-forgiveness and a forgiveness of sins is impossible in the mouth of Jesus. (4) The conferring of such honors upon Peter is wholly inconsistent with the title "Satan" which Jesus gives him in the next breath. (5) Peter was, in reality, much more like a reed than a rock—witness, for instance, his denial of Jesus in the hour of his trial and his desertion of the Gentile cause at Antioch.[3] (6) Paul would not have dared to "withstand Peter to the face" had such an exalted position ever been given him by Jesus. (7) The use of the term *church,* in the specific sense in which it is here employed, is a clear instance of anach-

[1] See especially 18:15–17 which points clearly to the existence of an ecclesiastical hierarchy.

[2] 3:16. [3] Gal. 2:12.

ronism if we assume this passage to have been an utterance of Jesus.

For, the Christian Church, or "ecclesia," was not even thought of until the conception of the *new* "chosen people" had taken hold of the apostle Paul. Jesus, as a Jew, could have used the term church only in that generic sense familiar to all adherents of Judaism, the equivalent of the Hebrew Kāhāl, the whole congregation of Israel, as the people of God. But in the sixteenth and eighteenth chapters of Matthew's gospel the word church is used to designate the new people of God, the Christian society as a corporate whole, equated with the kingdom of God which Jesus had come to establish. We see the same use of the term in the Book of Acts (5:11), signifying the whole body of believers as contrasted with other residents of Jerusalem. So, also, Paul, in his first letter to the Corinthians (12:28), refers to the Church of God as contrasted with Jews and Greeks. For him the church was the new chosen people, Jews and Gentiles being merged in it as parts of "the body of Christ"—a synonym for "church." Not until Paul had broken with Judaism and launched his new theory of salvation as the kernel of a new religion did the word church

take on the special signification suggested in the Matthean passage, a meaning wholly foreign to the thought and attitude of Jesus. (8) The earliest known reference to this passage is surprisingly late. We find it in a letter written by Victor, bishop of Rome, about the year 200. (9) The crucial verse, which reports the conferring of unique authority upon Peter is wanting in Tatian's "Diatessaron," or "Harmony of the Gospels," compiled about the year 170. It is difficult to understand how it could have been omitted had it then existed.

We, therefore, conclude that the three verses, constituting the disputed passage, were incorporated in Matthew's gospel in the second century when the growing pretensions of the bishop at Rome sought the sanction of Jesus.

Not only is it quite clear that Jesus lived and died a Jew, with no thought whatever of substituting a new religion for Judaism, but it is also clear that if his disciples had not recovered from the shock of his arrest, trial and crucifixion and from the consequent sense of disappointment and despair which that tragedy engendered, Christianity, as a religion rooted in the Christ idea, would not have sprung into existence. Hence the real starting-point for our

inquiry into the beginnings of Christianity is the garden of Gethsemane, from which the disciples fled in terror when their Master was betrayed and arrested. It is noteworthy, in passing, that both the Matthean and Markan gospels contain the statement "they all fled." The Lucan gospel, representing a later tradition, makes the disciples stay in Jerusalem and there await Pentecost. The probable motive behind this account of what transpired was the author's wish to exonerate the disciples from the charge of cowardice involved in the report of the earlier narratives.

Under the crushing blow of the fateful culmination of their Master's ministry, the disciples lost courage and self-command; they wavered in their faith and fled in fear to their Galilean home.[1] Perhaps their first impulse was to resume their fishing and other former pursuits and live in the spirit of Jesus' teaching. Or, for aught we know, their thought may have been to retire to some secluded spot, far from the madding crowd, and there cultivate the religious life, sheltered from the world's

[1] We infer *Galilean* from the accounts of both Matthew and Mark according to which Jesus declares he will reappear in *Galilee*. Matt. 27:55; Mark 16:7; Acts 2:7.

temptations, in order that when He came down from heaven the Son of Man would, at least here, find faith on the earth. But they did neither of these things and, for the adequate reason that their faith and courage came back to them. Let us endeavor to trace the probable steps of this recovery.[1] First came the precious recollections, the blessed memories of those eighteen months spent here in the inspiring company of their Master. Here it was that he had called them to his ministry. Here they had walked and conversed with him, here they had heard the gospel and seen the wondrous healings of disordered souls. Out of these treasured reminiscences there rose the conviction that Jesus could not be in Sheol with all the rest of the dead. Had not Moses and Elijah and Enoch been translated to heaven? Had not the psalmist written, "Thou wilt not suffer thy Holy One to see corruption"? Surely, then, he who was greater than any of these must have somehow escaped from Sheol. Following close upon this conviction came the vision of Jesus to Peter, whose neurotic, mercurial, impulsive, excitable

[1] For a fuller discussion of this see the author's chapter on "The Resurrection" in "The Life of Jesus in the Light of the Higher Criticism."

nature made him peculiarly susceptible to such a psychic experience. And he had only to say he had seen Jesus for the statement to work magnetically and contagiously upon the other disciples. Given, then, the reminiscences of their life with Jesus in Galilee, the consequent conviction that such an Holy One could not stay permanently in the realm of shades; given the belief of Peter that he had actually seen Jesus; given, also, the contagious effect of his ecstatic experience upon his fellow-disciples, and the conditions are provided for a transformation of cowards into heroes, of renegades into apostles. True, they had slept in Gethsemane while their Master prayed; now they were awake to the call of the hour. They had been dull of understanding indeed; now they were clear both as to their spiritual inheritance and the duty it imposed on them. Well might they recall the words with which Jesus had summoned them to missionary work: "What I tell you in private declare ye in public. Ye are the light of the world. Men do not light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a lamp-stand so that it may give light to all that are in the house. Even so let your light shine among men."[1] Here, then, in this re-

[1] Matt. 5:14, 15.

vival of courage and faith in the hearts of the despondent and despairing disciples, is the real starting-point back to which the rise of the Christian Church may be traced. Christianity dawned with the return of the transformed disciples from Galilee to Jerusalem to prepare for the reappearance of Jesus from heaven as the Messiah and for the judgment that would follow. Of the day and the hour of his coming knew no one, not even the angels. But that it would be very soon and in the generation to which Jesus himself belonged, all alike believed. Nothing indeed had been so persistently affirmed as this expectation.

Accompanying the eleven[1] from Galilee to Jerusalem were certain women, Mary the mother of Jesus and his four brothers(Joses, James, Judge and Simon).[2] Unknown others joined this group, so that the number was increased to

[1] They are spoken of as "disciples" and as "apostles." A disciple is one who learns, as opposed to one who teaches (rabbi). An apostle is one sent forth to teach, a delegate of the person who sends him. "Apostle" was the title Jesus conferred on his twelve disciples when he sent them forth, on a certain occasion, to preach and to heal. But the title soon became a customary designation and is so used in various parts of the New Testament, *e.g.* Luke 17:5; 24:10; Acts 1:2.

[2] Acts 1:2–14; cf. Matt. 13:55

one hundred and twenty.[1] Remember now that all these persons were Jews; all were devoted to the religion of Moses and the Prophets, even as Jesus himself had been. And the one characteristic which differentiated these persons from the rest of their fellow-Jews was their belief that Jesus was the Messiah and that he would soon return to fulfil the function of this office. All other Jews simply believed in the Messiah and his coming, but denied that Jesus was he.

Assembled in an upper room of the city, the first order of business was the election of a substitute for Judas, so that the original number of disciples might be maintained. Scripture, indeed, seemed to call for the restoration of this number, witness Peter's quoting of passages from the Psalms (Ps. 69:25; 109:8), passages which he construed as intimating that the treachery of Judas had been foretold and that someone should take his place. Incidentally it may be remarked that the context of these passages gives no warrant for Peter's interpretation of them. The probable explanation of the desire to restore the original number of disciples is the fact that twelve was looked upon

[1] Acts 1:15.

as a number having sacred completeness. Were there not twelve tribes of Israel and twelve thrones in heaven for the twelve apostles? Therefore, Judas' place must be filled in the company of disciples and the number twelve restored. Note the thoroughly democratic character of this election. There was no hierarchy, not even a hint of one. Peter simply acts as spokesman of the group, proposing that all men present who had known Jesus from the day of his baptism to that of his death should be regarded eligible for the position made vacant by the death of Judas. To this proposition, all present assenting, they proceeded with the election—the women, it would seem, treated on equal terms with the men. Nominations being in order, Joseph Justus and Matthias were named as candidates. Then, following prayer for Divine guidance in the choosing of one of these nominees, lots were cast and Matthias was duly declared the choice of the assembly and of God who presided over the casting of the lots. Contrast the simplicity, democracy and ethicality of this election with the practices of later ecclesiasticism in the election of popes and the appointment of cardinals.[1]

[1] See Dean Stanley: "Christian Institutions."

The author of the opening chapters of the Book of Acts regarded this reorganization, or completing of the group of disciples, as the beginning of a new era. Accordingly, he believed it was ushered in on the morning of the day of Pentecost, the Jewish festival which commemorated the giving of the Law on Mt. Sinai and which was celebrated on the fiftieth day after the offering of the barley-sheaf in Passover week.[1] Then it was that the twelve, while "assembled for supplication and prayer," were suddenly startled by the sound as of a mighty rushing wind and the appearance of cloven tongues of fire, which forthwith sat upon each of the twelve, so that all were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to talk foreign languages understood by the foreigners then living in Jerusalem, who promptly interpreted the strange utterances as evidence of intoxication. But Peter refutes the explanation, reminding them that it was only nine o'clock in the morning and that consequently these apostles could not be drunken. No, he continued, these are but fulfilling what was prophesied by Joel three centuries before, namely, that the time was coming when God would pour out his spirit and men

[1] Jubilees 6; Ex. 23.

would utter predictions and see visions and God would show wonders in fire and vapor and whosoever in that day should call upon the name of the Lord the same would be saved.[1] Such, in brief outline, is the story recorded in the second chapter of the Book of Acts. Evidently the author believed that on the day of Pentecost the apostles were endowed with power to speak foreign languages. But not only is this most improbable, but nowhere else in the New Testament is there a hint of such power. Paul certainly did not have it and no one needed it more than he. But Paul did have what he called "the gift of tongues," possessed also by many others and regarded by all as a token of the presence and influence of the Holy Spirit. In the fourteenth chapter of his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul refers to this gift of speaking an unknown tongue, intelligible only to God; a form of ecstatic speech, uttered in a trance-state and requiring interpretation in order to be made edifying to the listeners. It was a sign that the spirit of the risen and ascended Christ had made itself manifest in the possessor of the gift. It was a spontaneous ejaculation of incoherent words and sounds, natural to those who had

[1] Joel 3.

come into possession of a new and redeeming religion. A *"charisma"* or gift it was, like healing, prophesying and preaching, to be used for edification through the aid of an interpreter. But the author of the Book of Acts, writing some fifty years after Paul's time, misunderstood Paul's conception of this charisma and construed "speaking with tongues" to mean "talking foreign languages," whereas to Paul it meant one of the mysterious operations of God, intelligible to Him alone and intended only for Him.

So impressed were the bystanders by this charismatic manifestation and by the speech of Peter which followed it that, according to our author, about three thousand persons were added to the one hundred and twenty who formed the original Jerusalem group of believers in the Messiahship and speedy return of Jesus.

And now begins the work of systematic preaching to the Jews, not, however, the gospel of Jesus with its stress on the morality of the spirit, not the parables and Sermon on the Mount, but the belief that Jesus is the Messiah and that he will speedily appear to fulfil the function of Messiah as inaugurator of the kingdom of God on earth. No, the work of the

disciples was not a continuation of the gospel of Jesus; rather was it a reproduction of the work of the Baptist. For, like John, the disciples stressed the coming of Messiah as near at hand and they adopted baptism as a symbol of purification and preparedness for entrance into the kingdom. A baptism of repentance it was, like John's, and preceded by a confession of sins, securing to each penitent forgiveness and also immunity from the terror of the impending Messianic judgment. The simple, practical, ethical gospel of Jesus, far from being preached and enlarged upon by his disciples, was replaced by a world-Messianic gospel, the preaching of belief in Jesus as the Messiah and the necessity of being prepared to enter the kingdom and escape "the wrath to come." Note that this preaching campaign began very quietly. For, we cannot imagine the Governor of Judea allowing a movement—directly related to one who had been judged a revolutionary criminal and, as such, had just been executed—to develop and make converts by the thousand.[1] We, therefore, conclude that our author has somewhat idealized the facts and exaggerated the in-

[1] Acts 2:41; cf. 4:4.

cipient success of the new movement. Note also that this preaching was tolerated by non-sympathizing Jews only because they observed that the apostles obeyed the Law, attended the temple-services and led pious lives. Nay more, they had given undeniable evidence of healing power, especially Peter and John. What gave offence to the orthodox Jews was the substance of this apostolic preaching—the resurrection of Jesus from Sheol, his ascension into heaven and his expected return as the Messiah. These beliefs formed the essential content of Peter's initial speech in which he called on the Jews to repent of their rejection of Jesus because he *is* the Messiah, proved to be such by his resurrection, by the descent of his spirit upon the apostles as well as by predictions in the writings of the Prophets. In the second speech attributed to Peter he told his hearers how the crucifixion of Jesus had been foretold and quoted for them the statement of Moses that in the latter days "a prophet will appear whom the people should hear," adding that Jesus was this predicted prophet. Let Israel, therefore, repent, accept Jesus as the Christ and so receive the promises of God. Thus the religious position of the apostles was definite and clear-cut. They grafted

the belief in the Messiahship of Jesus and his return as Messiah on their Jewish theology. The slogan of the group was *Maranatha,* "The Lord come!" They ransacked the Old Testament to support their view of the crucifixion which to them was not, as to orthodox Jews, "a stumbling-block," but a fate that had been foretold. Jesus' sufferings, they held, were divinely ordained, they were a prearranged part of the Messiah's vocation and not at all a thwarting of the Divine will. The apostles further insisted that the Law, while indispensable to salvation yet needed supplementing by belief in the redeeming power of Jesus' death. If the orthodox Jews objected that Jesus could not be the Messiah because he was rejected by his own people, the apostles met the objection with the words: "This is the stone which was set at naught by you builders and which is become the head of the corner." [1] If the resurrection of Jesus was denied, the psalmist's assurance was quoted in reply, viz., that the Messiah of whom he wrote "should not see corruption." If one doubted the return of Jesus, his scepticism was met with a passage from Daniel, demonstrating, in the judgment of the apostles, the certainty of

[1] Acts 4:11.

Jesus' coming.[1] They looked ahead with confidence and enthusiasm to the ushering in of the kingdom of God by Messiah-Jesus. And they conceived the kingdom, not as a heavenly felicity, not as a state of inward purity, but as a new order of society on earth. At first, the preaching of the apostles was not seriously interfered with. But after Peter's second speech, certain members of the priestly party, chafing under its widespread acceptance, caused Peter, and John, who was with him, to be arrested. Both, however, were released with a warning to desist from preaching and healing. A few days later, the whole band of twelve apostles was arrested for contempt of court, having failed to heed the warning of the council. At the trial the statement was made, "We ought to obey God rather than men," and Peter reiterated the argument advanced at the preceding trial. Incensed and infuriated, the council was about to order the apostles to be put to death for blasphemy when a distinguished scholar and doctor of the Law, Gamaliel by name, the grandson of Hillel, interceded, pleading for toleration and advising the council to let these men alone, on the ground that if what they stood

[1] Acts 3:19; cf. Dan. 7:13.

for be false the movement would soon die a natural death, but if their message have truth in it, how unfavorably it would reflect upon the council to be found fighting against the truth. So the apostles, after being scourged for disobedience to the court's order, and as a warning for the future, were discharged. "Yet they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus the Christ, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.[1] And the number of converts continued to increase. Among them was a Greek Jew named Stephen, a man of exceptional ability in debate. Entering into discussion with certain Jews, he quoted Moses against their orthodoxy and declared that Jesus would destroy the temple and change the customs inherited from Moses. For this he was arrested and brought to the council to answer the charges of blasphemy. In his defence he reviewed the history of Israel, stressing two points in particular, viz. (1) that God had revealed Himself apart from the temple and in other lands so that even were the temple to be destroyed His care for Israel would not cease; and (2) that with characteristic perversity and blindness the Jews had rejected their God-sent

[1] Acts 5:41, 42—an historical chapter with legendary elements.

deliverers, Joseph and Moses, and in a still more shameful way, Jesus. Then, with a sublime outburst of indignation Stephen brought his defence to a close. "Ye stiff-necked, ye uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye."[1] Whereupon the council gnashed their teeth upon him, had him dragged outside the city-wall and there stoned to death. By one of the strange coincidences of history the man who was to take up Stephen's cause and put his thought into definite and victorious form was the man at whose feet the stoners of the martyr laid their cloaks—Saul, afterwards called Paul. Abhorrent as the doctrines of Stephen then seemed to him, the calm serenity and trustfulness expressed on the face of the dying martyr took strong and deep hold on the heart of the orthodox Saul and, later, became a powerful influence in creating the heterodox Paul. Immediately after Stephen's death there ensued a general persecution by the Jews of all who believed in the Messiahship of Jesus, driving the apostles out of Jerusalem to the surrounding country districts. Here they carried on their missionary work, much after

[1] Acts 7:51.

the manner of the early Franciscans, friend quietly revealing to friend the glad gospel till all the region round Judea, (as in all Italy) was filled with the inspiring message. Into Samaria and beyond, to Joppa and Cæsarea, even as far as Damascus—to which Syrian city Saul made an expedition to suppress the Messianic heresy—did the persecuted missionaries carry their Messianic belief. Across the Mediterranean it was taken, to Cyprus, Phœnicia and Antioch. In all these places Jews were converted to the belief that Jesus is the Messiah. The number of converts reported by the author of the Acts is surely an exaggeration, for the great majority of Jews remained untouched by the belief. If, now, we ask why was their response so limited, the answer is because most of the Jews who heard the new doctrine could not reconcile it with the fact of the crucifixion. For, they argued, if Jesus were really the Messiah he would not have been rejected by his own people, much less crucified. And though the missionaries met this objection by appeal to Old Testament foretellings of both the rejection and the crucifixion, it failed to convince. So, too, when these Jews asked, why was Jesus crucified, and the apostles answered that the sacri-

fice on the cross furnished a means of salvation to all who acknowledged it, this response carried no conviction. On the contrary, it was met with the counter-question: Is not the Law sufficient unto salvation? And though the reply to this was that the Law is *indispensable* to salvation, and belief in the efficacy of Jesus' sacrifice secures salvation, yet for the conservative majority this contention carried no weight. Concerning this general persecution, which occurred in the year 34-35, it should be noted that it was but one of a number of minor persecutions which broke out spasmodically during the first two centuries of our era. Hence the apostles were enabled to maintain their cause in Jerusalem, returning thither after the persecution had subsided. Indeed, so long as they obeyed the Law and were found in attendance at the temple services, the main motive for persecution was wanting. Even against Paul, persecuting steps were taken only when he had been accused of violating the Law by bringing Gentiles into the temple.[1] Two important effects followed from this general persecution in the year of Stephen's death. First, it evidenced the breach between orthodox Judaism and the

[1] Acts 21:27.

Messianic sect of Judaism represented by the apostles and their followers. All prospect of a reconciliation between the two parties became increasingly unpromising. Second, the persecution led to the expansion of missionary work by driving the missionaries out of Jerusalem. And this, in turn, prepared the way for the Christian missionary, Paul, who, as we shall see, effected the *complete* transition from Judaism to Christianity.

Our chief source of information concerning the events we have discussed is the Book of Acts. Upon its data we have drawn to support statements of historical and biographical interest. Once or twice we have had occasion to question the truth of what was reported by the author. At times we have felt that he must have had a decided tendency to embellish or exaggerate the facts at his command. And these impressions gain a measure of endorsement from modern scholarship. Long has the Book of Acts been under fire as a dubious source of information on the events with which it deals. Its untrustworthiness has been remarked upon by critics of every school. Of late, however, a reaction has set in, due for the most part, to the advances made in critical apparatus and acumen. A more

discriminating judgment of its contents and a juster appreciation of its author's purpose and motive have been developed, so that today one must turn toward, rather than away from, the book, consulting it carefully indeed, but not fearfully, as a valued informant on many a detail of post-crucifixion history.[1]

Not to dwell at too great length upon the genuineness and authenticity of the book, let it suffice if, before proceeding further, we note, briefly, the more important points which justify reliance on most of what it relates.

By the *genuineness* of a book is meant that it was written by the author whose name it bears; by *authenticity* is understood that the narratives of the book are accurately and completely reported. It would seem from a comparison of the first verse of the book with the preface of the third gospel (see. 1-4) that both works are by the same hand. The many points of fundamental agreement between the gospel and the Book of Acts—notably the linguistic and stylistic peculiarities, the equality of Gentiles with Jews as recipients of the gospel, the kindly attitude taken toward Samaritans; these, too,

[1] See especially the article by Prof. H. H. Wendt, in the *Hibbert Journal*, October, 1913.

point to singleness of authorship. The presence of the so-called "We" sections in the Book of Acts[1] seems to argue for composite authorship, but, as has been often shown, the author of these sections may well have been the author of the entire book because it begins with a personal address, "The former treatise have I written, O Theophilus," and a subsequent "we" would naturally include the "I" of the preface. Nor again, does the date, 100 A.D., assigned to the book, forbid belief in the singleness of its authorship or that its writer was a companion of Paul who produced his narrative, for the most part, from personal experience and for the rest relied on other sources of information.

Granted that the book is "saturated with the marvelous," this does not compel us to question the substantial accuracy of its narrative. As for the passages that gainsay what Paul reported in his letter to the Galatians, it must be remembered that this epistle was written at white heat and under extreme pressure and, as such, does not represent the habitual thought and spirit of the apostle. Nay, more his own moody temperament, admitted by himself and

[1] Acts 16, 10 *et passim.*

revealed in his letters, warrants acceptance of what the Book of Acts relates concerning him. If it be said that "Acts makes Peter unduly Pauline," a just answer would be that a more liberal spirit obtained in the church at Jerusalem in the early days, before James became head of the church, and that the liberality of Paul may have occasioned the narrowness of James,—a sequence of which we have many a parallel in religious history. No intelligent, free-minded critic will maintain that the book, in its entirety, is trustworthy. On the other hand the assertion that "the book is an historical romance cut out of whole cloth" is an unwarranted assumption. Be it frankly recognized that the book contains historical, biographical, chronological inaccuracies, which, in the light of recent scholarship, can be readily detected; grant that the book shows unmistakable signs of sympathies that led the author to smooth down differences between Peter and Paul; admit that there are anachronisms in the book which point to carelessness or misinformation; yet, despite these defects and limitations, discerning judgment must pronounce the book, as a whole, an honest and authentic piece of historical literature.

From what has been thus far said concerning the first days of the disciples in Jerusalem after the crucifixion, it must be clear that they had no thought of launching upon the world a new type of religion. They were simply heterodox Jews holding, along with their inherited Judaism three extra beliefs—the Messiahship of Jesus, his return from heaven, and the efficacy of his death on the cross as a means of salvation, supplemental to the Law. By birth, education and confession these men were Jews and remained Jews throughout their life. They represented a sect of Judaism, i.e., a part of Judaism cut off from the rest to live for itself and convert all the rest into material for its own growth. Their religious history is one prolonged confirmation of this attitude and endeavor. They were not Christians because there had not been developed, as yet, a religion definitely distinct from Judaism. This was to be eventually evolved from the Jewish sect represented by the apostles. Their type of religion might be called "Messianism," or "Nazarenism" to distinguish it, alike from Christianity and from Judaism.[1] What they did was to take *the first step* away from orthodox Judaism to-

[1] Acts 24:5.

ward the formation of a new religion. They were the link connecting that Judaism with the work of the apostle Paul. For him it remained to lead the way out from Nazarenism to Christianity. But before coming to this absorbingly interesting subject—the part played by Paul in the evolution of the new religion—it will be worth our while to come closer to the life and thought of the primitive community which represented Nazarenism at Jerusalem. To this the next lecture will be devoted.

IV

THE PRIMITIVE COMMUNITY IN JERUSALEM

We have seen that the primitive community in Jerusalem, composed of the twelve apostles and their followers, was a Jewish community. The members of this group differed from all other Jews in the following five particulars. They believed (1) that Jesus was the Messiah; (2) that he would soon return from heaven and prove himself such by inaugurating the kingdom of heaven on earth; (3) that his sacrifice on the cross served as a means of salvation supplemental to the saving power of the Law; (4) that there is a way of living (ἀδος) to be adopted by all who share these three views concerning Jesus; and (5) that all goods of whatever kind should be held in common and private property be reduced to a minimum.

Characteristic of their "way" of living was the

habit of taking no thought for the morrow, laying up no treasures on earth, praying for them who persecuted, loving enemies—by no means an impossible achievement to the primitive community, because, as was instanced in the case of Stephen, the real meaning of this virtue had been grasped.[1] Still another feature of their "way" of living, was the habit of going about with faces turned skyward in order to catch the first possible glimpse of Messiah-Jesus when he came down from heaven. In a word, the "way" meant living then and there, as though Jesus had already descended and established the kingdom of God and thus irradiating daily life with the glow of a divine enthusiasm and consecration.

Concerning the kind of communism practiced in the primitive community it is difficult to determine precisely what it was. And the reason is that the author of our one only authority on the question has left us contradictory accounts, drawn from various documents at his command and woven into his record with no consciousness of any discrepancies. From one of the passages in his history[2] we learn that the sale of all possessions whatsoever was en-

[1] Acts 7:60. [2] Acts 2:45.

joined upon the community, the income to create a common fund from which the needs of the members were to be supplied. According to what is stated elsewhere[1] it is clear that only lands and houses were to be sold and that from the sale of these alone a common treasury was to be formed. On the other hand, we find, as against the preceding injunctions, the authorizing of retention, for private use, of one's property, or of money derived from the sale of it, the owner being expected to part willingly with a portion of what he possessed as need arose.[2] Obviously from such conflicting clauses it is impossible to determine the exact character of the communism that was practiced. In all probability the concurrent testimony of two passages[3] brings us as close to the truth as we can hope to come, viz., that property holders were not required to dispose of their holdings so that a common monetary fund might be created, but rather, that owners placed their property, in a general way, at the disposal of the community guaranteeing that no one should be in want and making community of goods in this sense a characteristic of the community-life. Thus the well-to-do helped to support the poorer members in

[1] Acts 4:34. [2] Acts 5:3,4. [3] Acts 2:44; 4:32.

the spirit of charity rather than on the basis of any precise and economic arrangement. Just as there had been a common purse among the immediate followers of Jesus, so among the brethren in Jerusalem, living together as though Jesus had already returned to them, it was felt that there should prevail a corresponding communistic principle, to be practically applied in harmony with the altered conditions of the new environment. Thus there arose in Jerusalem during the first half of the first century, this voluntary communism, based on the example of the original twelve, inspired by that sympathy for the poor which was a conspicuous trait in the character of Jesus and actuated by jubilant belief in the speedy advent of Jesus who would lead the way to the true and imperishable riches. Why, then take thought for the morrow, why wish to lay up earthly treasures, seeing that so soon an inheritance of spiritual and eternal treasure would be theirs? What better thing could a wealthy man do with his money than spend it in beneficent ways while there is still time to make good use of it? Who would waste time and energy in working out a detailed system of social and economic existence when, perhaps even before it had been

mapped out, all further use for it would have disappeared? No wonder then that the "way" of living, in its ethical and social aspects, took on the particular form which early Christian literature attests. Incidentally it may be of interest to note that the voluntary communism of the primitive community proved disastrous, precisely as have kindred Christian socialistic experiments in our own day. For we have the testimony of the apostle Paul who on several occasions had to solicit aid for the poor brethren of the mother church at Jerusalem.[1]

Alas that communism, of whatever kind, always captivates loafers as well as saints and enlists along with consecrated adherents unscrupulous hangers-on, ever ready and eager to seize any and every opportunity whereby something may be had for nothing! Typical of all the splendid social schemes of the ages is their offering to the imagination of what the heroic rejoice to give and also that which dead-beats are greedy to take.

Naturally enough such an order of society as that of the primitive community, based on brotherhood and mutual honor and trust, offered its temptations, then as now, and in

[1] Gal. 2:10; I. Cor. 16:1-3.

the story of Ananias and Sapphira we have an illustration of one of these temptations. This man and woman, members of the community, had sold a piece of property, keeping for themselves part of the money derived from its sale, yet professing to have given over the entire amount for the benefit of the community, as was expected in this case. When interrogated as to the proceeds and their disposal of it they lied and, according to the narrator, were instantly struck dead.[1] Without pausing to rehearse the story in detail let it suffice only to observe that the chief fault of this unscrupulous pair was not their keeping to themselves part of the price of the land, but their pretending to have paid all of it to the treasurer of the community. It was their deceitful attempt to shine in the estimation of the brethren and get credit for generosity when they had been thieves, secretly retaining what in honor belonged to the community; this, it is, that deserves supreme condemnation. Be it observed, also, that the very existence of such a story, embellished history, or legend, as it plainly is, proves that the spirit of honor and trust animated the community. Nor, again, could any-

[1] Acts 5:5–10.

thing more adequately attest the high ethical spirit and standard of the community as a whole, than the belief that, for the sin of stealing and lying, so terrible a punishment as instantaneous death was inflicted.

There were, then, five respects in which the Jerusalem community differed from the rest of the Jews. The differentiating features constituted the community a *sect* of Judaism, for in all other respects they were like their orthodox brethren. Far from wishing to regard themselves as representatives of a new religion, they felt they were true descendants of the faithful remnant of Israel of which Isaiah had spoken, the saving kernel of the nation. They spoke of themselves as "the seed of Abraham," "the elect," "the people of God," "believers," "saints," "the church of God,"[1] while the Jews who refused to accept Jesus as the Messiah they designated "the synagogue of Satan." By these names they wished to convey their conviction that they were "a people *within a people,*" the real and only inheritors of the glory yet to be. They called themselves "believers" because they held to belief in the Messiahship of Jesus; "saints," because they had been sanctified by

[1] Rom. 11:8, 33; Acts 5:14; 9:32, 41.

the descent of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost morning; "the church," or assembly (ecclesia), because this term, the equivalent of the Hebrew Kāhāl, expressed the idea of a community called of God and was the most solemn expression in the religious vocabulary of Judaism. It signified the people in their relation to God with whom a covenant had been made. To have adopted this peculiarly meaningful term as descriptive of the primitive community was nothing less than a stroke of genius.[1] Nor, again, was it the purpose of the members to transform society in accordance with some scheme of social reconstruction. Rather was it to let the passing order of society be and, during the short interval that would transpire until "the coming of the Lord," live together in the spirit of his life and according to his teaching.

Reference has already been made more than once to this great expectation and as we shall have occasion to recur to it many times more, it may be well if at this point we pause to clarify our thought of the "Kingdom of God" and the hopes bound up with it in New Testa-

[1] See Harnack: "The Constitution and Law of the Church" for fuller details concerning these names.

ment times. No one who reads the gospels, the Acts, the Epistles, the Revelation, with unbiased mind, can fail to see that the New Testament is saturated with the Messianic expectation. As with an atmosphere the whole record is pervaded by the belief that the existing order of things is soon coming to an end and a new type of society to be miraculously established in its place. From the First Epistle to the Thessalonians, earliest of the New Testament writings, to the Second Epistle of Peter, latest of its constituent books, we find the various authors on tip-toe of expectation, each describing the advent of the heavenly kingdom in figurative language aglow with intense feeling. So vital and fundamental is the recognition of this fact to an adequate appreciation of the beginnings of Christian doctrine and practice that we must pause at this point to review the principal passages of the New Testament in which it is given unmistakable expression. Taking these references in their chronological order we begin with the familiar passage in which the message of John the Baptist, is stated.[1] John was preeminently a preacher of repentance and the burden of his gospel is the necessity of immediate

[1] Matt. 3; 1–2.

personal regeneration because the time is very short till the coming of the kingdom when none who are unfit for membership in that kingdom shall escape the wrath to come. Hence the short sharp admonition, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Jesus followed in the wake of John's ministry,[1] crowning his somewhat indefinite statements with precise predictions touching the time and the outward signs of the kingdom's advent. The end will come, he affirms, before the generation then living shall have passed away. All three of the Synoptic writers agree in their testimony on this point.[2] Again, Jesus is reported as saying that there are persons standing before him who will not taste death before the coming of the kingdom;[3] while, to his disciples, he declares that they will not have had time to complete the circuit of their preaching in the cities of Israel before the end will come.[4]

Concerning the "signs" of its coming we read in the Synoptic Gospels of Jesus foretelling the events that will signalize the great trans-

[1] Mark 1:14.
[2] Matt. 24:34; Mark 13:30; Luke 21:32.
[3] Mark 9:1. [4] Matt. 10:23.

formation. In the thirteenth chapter of the Markan gospel there has been embodied a document, written about the year 70 and sometimes called "the little Apocalypse," in which Jesus is quoted, predicting, with impressionist word-painting, the signs by which the catastrophic change will be heralded.[1] In the corresponding passage of the Matthean narrative Jesus is reported as saying that "immediately after" the aforesaid fatalities the end would come.[2] The third evangelist, incorporating in his record the Markan document and realizing that the end did not come at once, allowed for an interval between the destruction of Jerusalem and the coming of the kingdom. Consequently in his account of Jesus' prediction we read: "Jerusalem will be trodden down by Gentiles till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." And "then will the Son of Man come." It is noteworthy also that the author of the earliest extant biography of Jesus (the Markan) presents him not as an ethical teacher but rather as an eschatological teacher, one who believed with all his soul that the end of the world was near and who went from Galilee to Jerusa-

[1] Mark 13:7–8, 14–20, 24–27, 30–31.
[2] Matt. 24:29.

lem to precipitate the catastrophe, persuaded that by so doing and giving up his life for his belief, God would promptly make him the Messiah. Just here let it be emphatically affirmed that no effort at "spiritualizing" or "allegorizing" the terms "Kingdom of God" and "Kingdom of Heaven," so as to make them synonymous with glad tidings of salvation, or an exalted state of the soul, or a condition of spiritual purity, can set at naught their plain, clear, terrestrial reference. Granted that there are occasional verses[1] in which these terms appear as connoting something other than an external social state, they by no means contradict this latter conception. The truth is that Jesus used these expressions almost invariably to signify that new order of society on earth which he, like all other Jews, believed God would miraculously establish through His Messiah. When he did not so use these terms—as in the isolated passages just referred to—they were employed to indicate that inward moral purity which was the essential prerequisite for membership in the eternal kingdom so soon to come. To Jesus the "Kingdom of God" meant *both* the coming transfigured society and the condi-

[1] *e.g.* Luke 17:21; cf. I. Cor. 4:20; Rom. 14:17.

tion upon which entrance to it depended. But in the great majority of reported instances, his allusion was to the former alone. One has only to consult the inter-biblical books, notably "Enoch" and the "Psalter of Solomon," together with the literature of the Old Testament from the time of Amos to that of Daniel, to see that the New Testament conception of the kingdom of God is the product of a thought-process the beginnings of which can be traced to the Assyrian invasion of the northern kingdom, anticipated by the prophet-statesman Amos, in whose prediction of a glorious future for Israel we recognize the germ of what was slowly evolved in the course of seven centuries into the Synoptic and Pauline idea of the kingdom of God.

Reverting now to our chronological survey we pass from the views of John the Baptist and Jesus to the statements of the apostle Paul. Writing only twenty years after the crucifixion, he declared that at any moment, "in the twinkling of an eye," the Christ might appear to usher in the kingdom.[1] He himself expects to witness the great transfiguration. For him it is a mystery; i.e., a Divine secret

[1] I. Cor. 15:52.

which has been revealed to him.[1] In the most explicit terms he states his conviction that many of his readers will not die but undergo transfiguration, while those believers who have already died will first be awakened at the blast of the trumpet and then be also transfigured. And if the first letter to the Thessalonians be also a genuine epistle of Paul, the further conviction must be added that the living would be "caught up" with the awakened ones "to meet the Lord in the air" as he descended upon the clouds.[2]

In the light of these sayings of Jesus and Paul, there can be no question as to the pronounced eschatological character of their thinking. Moreover, we must note that this eschatology explains much of their ethical teaching. For, while it would be wholly unwarranted to assert that the ethics of Jesus and Paul is "purely eschatological," seeing that many an ethical precept of theirs is entirely devoid of association with thought of the coming crisis, yet there can be no overlooking the fact that such injunctions as those relating to improvidence, wealth, divorce and marriage are

[1] I. Cor. 15:51, cf. Rom. 11:25.

[2] I. Thess. 4:16, 17; cf. I. Cor. 16:22; 10:11; II. Cor.5:4; Phil. 3:21; I. Thess. 1:9, 10.

frankly and squarely grounded on an eschatological basis.[1] Similarly the temporary compromise effected by Paul and the apostles at the Jerusalem conference (to which we shall revert in a later lecture) is explained by reference to the same thought that the end of the world was near. It was agreed that each party should serve its own constituency in its own way, for the reason that the Kingdom is too near at hand to justify schism or protracted controversy.

Turning next to the Book of Revelation one can easily and unerringly read in its figurative language references to contemporary Roman history. The author points clearly to the impending destruction of Jerusalem, after which, he holds, the time of the end will be at hand. In the first chapter of this Apocalypse we read: "Behold he cometh with clouds, every eye shall see him and they also which pierced him." [2] And just as the book opens with a revelation of what is soon to happen, so it closes with the fervent utterance, "Surely I come quickly," which is greeted with the response, "yea, come Lord Jesus."

[1] Matt. 6, 19 *seq.*, cf. 19:12 and I. Cor. 8:32-33.
[2] Rev. 1:7; 22:20.

The Book of Acts is wholly in harmony with the standpoint of earlier works. Again and again do the apostles appeal to men to repent and be converted so that their sins may be blotted out when the time of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. Scarcely a single speech there is in which reference to the coming of Jesus from heaven to usher in the kingdom is not made.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews, the author of which is unknown, the speedy advent of the last day is fervently expected and the readers are admonished to live the moral life because the great day is fast approaching; nay, there is but a "very little while remaining before the coming One will appear.[1]

Concerning the view presented in the Fourth Gospel, it must be observed that its author, while wholly out of sympathy with the popular politico-social conception, yet he does not ignore it but feels it incumbent upon him to reinterpret the idea in terms of Greek thought, along with other cardinal Jewish beliefs.

Equally significant it is that the writer of the appendix to this gospel (chapter xxi) retains the traditional doctrine of the kingdom, at

[1] Heb. 10:25, 37.

tributing to Jesus the saying, "If I will that he (John) tarry till I come, what is that to thee (Peter)?"—a remark which reminds us of the synoptic passage, "There be those standing here who will not see death till the kingdom come." Nothing could more conclusively prove the difference of authorship between the Fourth Gospel and its appendix than this inappropriate retention of an idea quite out of keeping with the character of the Logos-Jesus.

We come next to the so-called "Johannine" epistles, written about the same time as the Fourth Gospel. In these we are brought back again to the notion of a "final hour." But instead of being signaled by "war and rumors of wars," etc., it is by the appearance of "Antichrists," in the form of heretics, that "the end" is to be indicated.[1]

And when, after protracted delay in the fulfilment of the great expectation, mockers appeared, asking in sneering tones, "Where is the promise of his coming?" the writer of the so-called Second Epistle of Peter comes forward with a reply. It is that God the all-merciful One would not that a single soul be lost but rather that all should repent. And since in His

[1] I. John 2:18.

celestial reckoning a thousand years are only as a single day, let no one give way to doubt or despair of the coming of His kingdom.[1]

Thus, throughout the first century and a half of our era, it was generally believed in Jewish-Christian circles that the time was near at hand for a Divine judgment of mankind, for punishment of the heathen, vindication of the saints and for the establishment of the heavenly kingdom. Whether or not Jesus believed that he would himself fulfil the Messianic function and at the given signal usher in the new era, is still an open question. But that Paul, the apostles and their followers firmly believed that Jesus was the Messiah and that he would reappear as such and establish the kingdom of God on earth, there can be no question whatsoever.

We are accustomed to describe these members of the primitive community as "the first Christians." But if we are to speak accurately we must call them predecessors of the first Christians, because they had not as yet broken with Judaism nor had the name Christian come into existence, having been first used by pagan residents of Antioch to describe, derisively, the followers of the apostle Paul in that city.[2]

[1] II. Pet. 3:8. [2] Acts 11:26.

And it remained for him, as we shall see in the next lecture, to take the further step, beyond the Nazarenism of the primitive community—a sect of Judaism—to independent Christianity.

From what has been thus far said it must be clear that *enthusiasm* was the very breath of the primitive community. Herein lies the immediate explanation of the exceeding simplicity of worship and of church-government that marked the religion of these people. The intense belief that Jesus was the Messiah, the exciting expectation of his return, the glowing thought of the transformed society, or kingdom of heaven, that would follow, all combined to create a mental and spiritual feverishness that would of necessity be impatient with elaborate ritualism and ecclesiasticism. Very close is the connection between enthusiasm and simplicity of worship and of organization, as Professor Lake has so clearly shown in a noteworthy contribution to the *Harvard Theological Review*[1] and to which I gratefully acknowledge my indebtedness. Wherever enthusiasm is genuine and intense, there people will be satisfied with a minimum of ceremonialism and church-regula-

[1] April, 1912.

tions. But, once let there be felt a need for elaborating the simple church-service or for developing ecclesiastical organization, and it is a sure sign that the original enthusiasm has begun to cool and wane. Thus the pronounced simplicity and democracy of government and of worship that marked the religious life of the primitive community, as portrayed in the Book of Acts, testifies to the prevalence of intense enthusiasm, born, as we have seen, out of the supreme expectation of the time. There was, as yet, no such institution as the clergy. Religious meetings were conducted on a wholly democratic basis. Whosoever felt moved to lead in prayer, or in the reading of scripture, or in the utterance of prophecy, or the speaking with tongues, did so freely. And these practices constituted the simple elements of public worship. The institution of the clergy came with the decline of enthusiasm, as this in turn came with disappointment over protracted "delay in the Lord's coming." Again, in this early period of Church history, under the spell of intense enthusiasm, no formal test of fellowship was imposed on persons seeking membership. All who were enthusiastic for Jesus, were, *ipso facto,* admitted to membership in the community. No

one, it would seem, was asked to "confess Jesus as Messiah" or to submit to baptism as a pledge of that confession. Baptism, we are led to believe, was still only a symbol of purification, of fitness for salvation, not a test of fellowship, or medium for separating Jews from believers in the Messiahship of Jesus.[1] Nor, again, was there, as yet, any Eucharist, or sacrament of the Lord's Supper, or sacrifice of the Mass, but only a commemorative meal, an "agape," or love-feast, expressing the loving union of the brethren and serving both as a social occasion and as a solemn, symbolic commemoration of the death of Jesus.[2] The conversion of this into a sacrament, i.e., the visible sign of an invisible grace, came, as did the ecclesiastical view of baptism, with the decline of enthusiasm and the consequent sense of need for more ceremonial.

Jesus had recognized but one test of fitness for admission to the coming kingdom, viz., character, obedience to the Divine will.[3] So in the community at Jerusalem there was at first no other test of fellowship. To be enthusiastic for Jesus was to seek to live in his spirit and do his bidding and that was enough to warrant

[1] Acts 2:40–41. [2] Acts 2:42.

[3] Matt. 7:21; 12:50 *et passim.*

membership. But soon it came to be held that to live in his spirit was impossible except as one admitted his Messiahship; nay more, that apart from the company of such believers there was no certainty of salvation and that even the finest moral living was of no account save as a step to the true righteousness attainable only by those who believed Jesus was the Messiah.[1]

Thus with the decline of enthusiasm superinduced by the non-appearance of the expected Messiah, there came an increasing disappearance of democracy, simplicity and spontaneity in the religious practices of the community followed by the rise of a clergy, an exclusive test of church fellowship and the "sacraments" of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Similarly in the realm of church government a corresponding change took place. For, a community living in hourly expectation of a complete and miraculous transformation of society will be indifferent to organization, or at least content with the least possible measure of government, whereas, with the recession of this expectation into the background of thought, an increasing sense of need for organization will be felt. Hence it was that non-fulfilment of this expecta-

[1] Acts 4:4; 16:30–33.

tion became—as we shall see more fully in our discussion of the Shepherd of Hermas—a most important factor in the rise and development of an ecclesiastical hierarchy. What we have to note now is that the mainspring of the original character of worship and government in the primitive community was the enthusiasm generated by the Messianic belief and that with its gradual decline both the religious services and the organization lost their pristine simplicity, taking on increasingly elaborate forms. These Christian institutions once established they soon became stereotyped and standardized as a preventive against disintegration and dissolution. The individualism that found expression in the free yielding to the operations of the Spirit gave way to the larger demands of the universal church. Already in the period of Paul's ministry we have evidence of this change, witness his letter to the Corinthians in which he bids them bridle their enthusiasm and subordinate their individual inspirations to the cause of general edification of the church. And only twenty years later the Roman Clement, writing to this same community, felt constrained to insist upon the preservation of order and fulfilment of the fixed rules and regula-

tions of their church. "The Master commanded the offerings and ministrations to be arranged with care and not to be done rashly and out of order but at fixed times and seasons. And where and when he would have them performed he himself ordained by his supreme will. They, therefore, that make their offerings at the appointed seasons are acceptable and blessed. Unto the high priest his proper services have been assigned, and to the priests their proper office is appointed, and upon the Levites their proper ministrations are laid. The layman is bound by the layman ordinances. They, therefore, who do anything contrary to the seemly arrangement dictated by the Master receive death as the penalty." Thus Christianity became, as was Judaism before it, a religion with prescribed ordinances, fixed forms of worship and of belief, exhibiting the influence of the Roman genius for law and government at every stage of its ecclesiastical development.

So long as the personnel of the primitive community consisted of only Palestinian Jews, all went well; the administration of affairs was conducted harmoniously and with no cause for complaint. But with the influx of Grecian Jews, or "Hellenists," as they are called in the margin

of the Revised Version of the New Testament, the signs of discord and discontent began to appear. The term Hellenists was applied to Greek proselytes to Judaism and also to Jews who had been born and educated outside of Palestine. They spoke Greek and were naturally influenced to some degree by Greek culture and liberality of thought. Consequently they were not as strict in their observance of Jewish religious ordinances as were their Palestinian brethren. Because of this laxness in devotion to the requirements of the Law as interpreted in Palestine these Hellenists were despised by the more conservative Jews. This anti-Hellenistic sentiment had its roots in that antipathy to all things Greek, which was first felt in the times of Alexander and reached an unparalleled pitch of intensity in the days of the Maccabees, when Antiochus Epiphanes attempted to force Greek customs and Greek religion on the subjugated Jews. Thus these Hellenists, though Jews, were suspected and disliked by the Jews of Jerusalem, even as the Hellenists, by reason of the greater liberality of their religious attitude and spirit, resented the punctiliousness and provincialism of their stricter brethren. Hence on both sides prejudice obtained, precluding the possibility of

harmonious relations within the fellowship. Indeed so different at heart was the typical Greek from the typical Pharisaic Jew that when they came together in the primitive community, trouble was certain to arise. And it arose in connection with the dispensing of alms to the poor. Who were these poor? Some were members who had suffered persecution and imprisonment for their confession of Jesus as the Messiah and who were now without means of support. Some were young people exiled from their Jewish homes by parents who disapproved of their association with this sect of Judaism. Some were widows who abandoned all thoughts of remarrying because of their belief in the speedy coming of Jesus and the kingdom. Some were orphaned girls who for the same reason entertained no thought of marriage and, like the widows, were thus dependent on the community for support.

Ever since the Babylonian exile, when most of those who returned were extremely poor, almsgiving had taken on increasing importance as a religious duty. As evidence of this we have the statements in the Apocryphal books of Tobit and Ecclesiasticus to the effect that alms "deliver from death" and "make an atonement

for sin."[1] In view of the large proportion of poor in the population it is no wonder that the apostles found themselves unequal to the task of serving the community in the double capacity of preachers and almoners.

Small wonder, too, that some members of the community should have felt themselves neglected in the distribution of alms. Chief among these was a group of Hellenistic widows who complained that the apostles showed favoritism to the Palestinian widows in the dispensing of charity. And they construed the alleged neglect as intentional, not realizing the tremendous demands that were being made on the apostles in their capacity both as preachers and as almoners. Murmuring among themselves over the favoritism shown their sisters of Palestinian birth, these Hellenistic widows caused actual dissention in the community. Whereupon the apostles, with judicious haste, called a meeting at which the whole question of the treatment of the poor in the community was discussed, culminating in the appointment of a committee of seven whose exclusive work should be visiting the fatherless and the widows and dispensing the charities of the organization.[2] All that was

[1] Tob. 3:10; Eccles. 3:30. [2] Acts 6:1–4.

required of the committee was that they should be men of good reputation equal to performing their duties with wisdom and kindliness. Note that the members of this committee are not called deacons, but simply "The Seven." Yet here in this narrative it is that the traditional account of the origin of the order of deacons in the church hierarchy is to be read, albeit the official title nowhere appears in connection with the ministrations of these seven. As for the "laying on of hands" this ceremony was simply taken over from Judaism and meant not a "conferring of the Spirit"—for they were supposed to be filled with the Spirit already, as candidates—but an outward symbol whereby the general public might know that the function of almoners had been intrusted to these men. And it is significant that the seven were chosen by the whole community, thus testifying again to the prevalence of the democratic ideal. Moreover, it is equally noteworthy that most of the seven, if not all, were Hellenists,[1] thus indicating a genuine desire on the part of the apostles to disabuse the minds of disaffected members that such a thing as favoritism obtained. But most noteworthy in the incident of

[1] Acts 6:5.

the Hellenistic widows' complaint is the fact that while the alleged neglect occasioned discord in the community its real cause lay deeper and remained unhealed by the appointment of a special committee on charities. That deeper cause was the fundamental difference between Jew and Greek with their respective inheritances and prejudices. Here is the root of all the future development of the Christian Church. For, it was these Hellenists, with their broad views and freer spirit, who eventually saved Christianity from the narrowness and provincialism in which orthodox Jews would have held it fast as a sect of Judaism. How Christianity was saved from this impending danger and how the final and complete break with Judaism was effected—this will form the subject-matter of the next lecture.

V

A CRISIS IN THE EVOLUTION OF CHRISTIANITY

In their efforts to convert fellow-Jews to belief in the Messiahship of Jesus, the apostles were confronted with the task of reconciling that belief with the fact of the crucifixion. For, to the unconverted Jews a crucified Messiah was a contradiction in terms, whereas to the apostles it was the fulfilment of prophecy and of Divine fore-ordination. True, the apostles themselves were for a time stunned by the tragedy of the cross and wholly at a loss to explain it. But eventually (as we have seen[1]) they arrived at the conviction that their Master could not remain in Sheol with all the rest of the dead; he must somehow have escaped and ascended to heaven whence he would re-

[1] See the chapter on "the Resurrection" in the "Life of Jesus in the Light of the Higher Criticism."

turn to inaugurate the promised kingdom of God and thus *prove* himself the Messiah. Accordingly, the apostles addressed themselves to the task of convincing their Jewish brethren that the crucifixion was not, as they thought, a disproof of Jesus' Messiahship; that his suffering on the cross, far from being the merited punishment meted out to an impostor, was but the fulfilment of God's purpose for the salvation of men. In support of these views the apostles turned to the recorded utterances of the Old Testament prophets, more especially those in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. Here the exilian prophet described "the suffering Servant of Yahweh," "the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, on whom God had laid the iniquity of us all and by whose stripes we are healed;" the seemingly unwarranted sufferings of an innocent soul having for their purpose the expiation of others' guilt. From the old and generally accepted notion that the sinner's suffering atoned for his sin it was but a step to the conception of *vicarious* human suffering. Not *all* the Israelites who had been taken captive by Nebuchadrezzar and carried off to Babylon were wicked. Some of those exiled ones had remained faithful to Yahweh and when they

raised the question, why should we suffer captivity with all the rest, the exilian Isaiah answered by saying that their suffering was vicarious. It paid for the sins of their fellow-exiles. Let the pious nucleus of the nation take comfort in knowing that through their unmerited sufferings the whole nation would be brought back to Yahweh. Despised and rejected of men, smitten and afflicted, this righteous remnant of the nation, personified by the prophet as "the suffering Servant of Yahweh," would be the savior of the nation whose purging from sin *must* be achieved before at-one-ement with God could be realized. And the greater the righteousness of this saving remnant the greater the efficacy of their suffering as a means of national redemption. Hence "it pleased Yahweh to bruise his servant," because of its redemptive power. And the sufferer, once aware of the beneficent effect of his sacrifice, tastes its fruit and is satisfied.[1] Such, in brief, was the theory of vicarious suffering as worked out by a great Hebrew thinker in the period of Jewish subjugation to Babylonian and Persian rule. Inheriting Isaiah's conception of vicarious atonement and construing his

[1] Isa. 53:10–12.

personification of Israel's righteous remnant as an allusion to Jesus, the apostles found in the predictions of the exilian prophet the necessary quotations wherewith to support their interpretation of the crucifixion. Nor was their view in the least inconsistent with the Levitical legislation which called for "the shedding of blood" (the life) as a prerequisite for securing at-one-ement with God. For, the apostles in their reasoning (and, above all, Paul) simply changed the nature of the offering. Instead of the sacrificial lamb that was to be slain, the blood of Jesus, the Lamb of God, had been shed, a sacrifice so transcendently significant as to make the crucifixion the most conclusive proof of Jesus' Messiahship. The death of Jesus was not for his own sins but for those of others. Far, then, from being an inexplicable tragedy, the crucifixion was a divinely ordained means whereby sinners could be forgiven and saved "from the wrath to come." It remained for the apostle Paul to enlarge upon this doctrine of atonement, showing that since moral character could be transferred, as in the case of Abraham's righteousness, so that of Jesus was conceived as transferable to those who believed in the efficacy of his atoning sacrifice. Now, side by side

with this theory of the atoning value of Jesus' death, the apostles and their followers held that obedience to the Jewish Law is indispensable to salvation. It had not yet occurred to anyone that if the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross was an adequate means of salvation then all further devotion to the prescriptions of the Law as a means of salvation could be dispensed with, particularly such requirements as those of circumcision and the eating of "Kosher" meat; practices regarded as the very badge of Judaism.

Had the movement away from Judaism stopped here at this dual devotion to the means of salvation (Jesus' death and the Law) it would have scored failure in its endeavor to reach and convert Gentiles. For, they had no interest in the Law. Therefore the success that attended missionary work among the Gentiles was fundamentally due to the surrender of this dual position and reliance on the latter source of salvation alone. Nay more, instead of further development toward an independent religion the movement would have represented more than a *Messianic sect* of Judaism. Before *Christianity* could come into existence someone had to see that the sacrifice of Jesus was an all-suf-

ficing means of salvation and meaningless if obedience to the Law were still insisted upon. The man who grasped the logic of the situation and championed exclusive reliance on the efficacy of Jesus' death as the sole source of salvation was the apostle Paul. This was at once the burden of his theological preaching and the commanding theme of the most masterly of his epistles.

Paul was born about four years earlier than Jesus and, like him, was of pure Jewish descent. He called himself "a Hebrew of the Hebrews," implying thereby that no Gentile blood flowed in his veins. Tarsus, the city of his birth, was the chief commercial center of the province of Cilicia, in Asia Minor, noted particularly for the manufacture of a coarse dark sail-cloth, made from the hair of the Cilician goat and used for making sailors' clothes, sails and tents. Here Paul learned the trade of tent-making (for the Jewish Law required every boy to learn a trade), and though he became a missionary preacher, the acquisition of this practical training proved, as he tells us,[1] most serviceable when without other means of livelihood. In the autobiographical portion of

[1] I. Cor. 4:12.

his letter to the Galatians, he tells us that he had been privileged to study in Jerusalem under the tutorship of Gamaliel, grandson of the distinguished Hillel, a doctor of the Law, exceptionally versed in rabbinical lore and in the subtleties of scriptural interpretation. Just what the duration of this tutelage under Gamaliel was we do not know. On the other hand it is certain that it did not include the week of Jesus' ministry in the Palestinian capital, because, in that case, Paul would have seen Jesus, whereas he expressly tells us he never saw Jesus except in a vision.[1]

In an Apocryphal book, "The Acts of Paul and Tecla," Paul is described as small of stature, bald-headed and hollow-eyed, his nose somewhat aquiline, and his expression "full of grace" —a description on which the traditional portrait of mediæval and renaissance art was based. Paul styled himself not only a "Hebrew of the Hebrews" but also "a Pharisee of the Pharisees,"[2] intimating thereby that he was a stickler for punctilious observance of the requirements of the Jewish Law, despite his Hellenism. He was in Jerusalem on the occasion

[1] I. Cor. 9:1; cf. Acts 26:15 and I. Cor. 15:8.

[2] Acts 23:6; 26:5; cf. Phil. 3:5.

of the stoning of Stephen and assisted the persecutors to the extent of keeping their coats while the death of the martyr was being accomplished. He lost no opportunity to manifest his hatred of the Messianic community. From his letter to the Galatians we learn "how that beyond measure he persecuted the church of God and wasted it." [1] In the eighth chapter of the Book of Acts we are told that he "made havoc of the church, entering into every house" and dragging forth to the council such inmates as were suspected of believing Jesus to be the Messiah. In the following chapter the author tells of Paul "breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord"—like a war-horse on entering the battlefield. Immediately after Stephen's death there occurred a general persecution of the Messianic community which had already made its influence felt in the regions round about Judea even as far as Damascus in Syria. Thither Paul went to ferret out the apostates from Judaism and bring them back to Jerusalem for trial, the high priest having given him a commission to make this inquisitional expedition.[2] But on the way to Damascus the persecutor had an experience

[1] Gal. 1:13. [2] Acts 9:1–2.

which transformed him into a champion of the cause he intended to destroy. Three different accounts of that experience are found in the Book of Acts. The first forms part of the historical narrative of the book, the other two appear as parts of Paul's addresses to the people of Jerusalem (from the stairway of the castle) and to King Agrippa, respectively.[1] As he was nearing Damascus Paul saw a light in the sky, from out of which came a voice saying, "Saul, Saul, why dost thou persecute me?" And Saul said, "Who art thou, Lord?" And the voice replied, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest; it is hard for thee to kick against the goad." And immediately he became blind and remained so for three days, his friends, who were with him, *but "who saw nothing,"* leading him into the city. The credibility of this experience on the way to Damascus is well attested by kindred data from the field of psychology.[2] But what particularly concerns us is an adequate and rational explanation of the experience. And this is furnished by consulting the letters of Paul, more especially those to the Galatians

[1] Acts 9:3–19; 22:3 *et seq.*; 26:9 *et seq.*

[2] See *e.g.*, the illustrations adduced by Prof. James in his "Varieties of Religious Experience."

and Corinthians. From these we are led to interpret the story of his conversion in terms of the following facts. First, his temperament was neurotic; addicted to visions, trances, revelations.[1] Several times does the author of the Book of Acts make mention of some opportune vision as determining the conduct of Paul, he believing it to have been divinely sent. Second, there was his recollection of the calm, serene, trustful expression on the face of the dying Stephen. Was there perhaps, after all, truth in what he stood for and died for? How else *could* he have faced death with such tranquillity and utter composure of heart and mind, with no word on his lips but a prayer for his enemies bidding God "not to lay this sin to their charge." Third, the long journey of one hundred and thirty-six miles from Jerusalem to Damascus gave Paul ample opportunity to reflect upon his career as a persecutor and on the Messianic convictions of Stephen. Could it be, Paul may well have thought, that these "Nazarenes" [2] were right, that God took Jesus' side and that his crucifixion was in truth a propitiation for the sins

[1] Acts 9:12; 22:17; II. Cor. 12:1–4.

[2] Aots 24:5.

of Israel? Fourth, Paul's use of the common Greek proverb, "It is hard for thee to kick against the goad," throws a flood of light upon the causes at work in bringing about his conversion. The allusion of the proverb is to a feature of agricultural life still observable in oriental countries. The farmer who drove the ox held the plough by the right hand and, in the left, a pointed stick to prod or goad the animal on. And when he pricked the ox rather severely the ox kicked against the goad. The meaning of the proverb applied to Paul's experience is clear. It was exceedingly difficult for him to suppress (kick against) the haunting conviction (goad) that Stephen and his fellow-Nazarenes were right in their views of Jesus. So difficult, indeed, did it become for Paul to down this persistently invading belief, "to kick against the goad," that at last he abandoned the effort. Unable to stamp out the ever-recurring conviction it finally mastered him. Thus, for this man of nervous temperament, of fervid, impetuous action, governed oftener by impulse than by reasoned-out conviction, reaching truth by flashes of insight rather than by steady searchings of careful inquiry, the long, hard struggle ended in

the episode thrice recorded in the Book of Acts.

In the first chapter of his letter to the Galatians Paul expressly states his independence of the twelve apostles on the ground that his gospel came to him directly "through the revelation of Jesus Christ." And in his first letter to the Corinthians he reaffirms his apostleship on the ground that he had "seen the Lord," referring to the "vision" that had been vouchsafed to him.

Clearly, then, he became converted from an orthodox Jew into a representative of Nazarenism through personal experience, having become convinced that Jesus had been "raised from the dead" and thereby proved himself to be the Messiah. And this conclusion was all the more readily reached because of that inner conflict of which he tells us in the fourteenth chapter of his letter to the Romans. Tormented by the warfare in himself, between the spirit and the flesh, he could not but be impressed by the fact that the Nazarenes, and more particularly Stephen, possessed that which he lacked, viz., spiritual peace. Small wonder, then, that the death of the martyr and the part Paul had taken in bringing it about struck him at last

with a sense of horror and shame. Small wonder, too, that a man of his temperament should experience, as the outcome of this inner strife, just such a vision as the author of the Book of Acts reported.

It is noteworthy that in his narrative, as far as the ninth verse of the thirteenth chapter, he uses the name "Saul" to designate the converted persecutor, but here it is remarked, parenthetically, that he "is also called Paul." Many explanations have been offered for this change of name. The context suggests that in honor of the conversion of Sergius Paulus, Saul took the name Paul, much as Scipio, after his conquest of Africa, was called "Africanus." But such a motive is scarcely in keeping with the character of the apostle. Much more likely it is that the new name was given him by Gentiles after his entrance upon missionary work among them. For Paulus signifies "little," and we know he was small of stature.[1] And by as much as his sympathies were far stronger with them than with Jews it was but natural that the name "Paul" should have eventually replaced the Hebrew "Saul." In all probability the change of name signified the change of sympa-

[1] II. Cor. 10:10

thies, experienced after his entrance upon his apostolic mission. The narrator of the story of Paul in the Book of Acts informs us that soon after the arrival of Paul at Damascus he was restored to sight, endowed with "the Spirit" and baptized by Ananias, a member of the primitive community who had fled from Jerusalem on the occasion of the general persecution there in the year 34. Obviously we have here a legendary account of what actually transpired, or perhaps the product of later reflection incorporated into the narrative. Be this as it may, it is clear from Paul's own testimony that he did not, immediately after his conversion, leave Damascus and go to Jerusalem, but remained in the neighborhood in the region just east of Syria, a retired place that would commend itself as offering opportunity for needed self-examination and self-collection after his recent transforming experience. Surely Paul must have felt it imperative to seclude himself in order that he might become adjusted to the new religious environment created by his conversion. How long he remained in retirement and what the course of his thinking was we do not know. Unhappily the record in Acts and Paul's own statements as

found in his letter to the Galatians are hopelessly irreconcilable.[1] Perhaps the actual course of events was as follows: After a period of quiet reflection and self-adjustment to the new order of religious beliefs, Paul preached in the synagogues of Damascus, inevitably arousing opposition so that he was compelled to flee from the city, going directly to Jerusalem. Here he remained for two weeks as Peter's guest, meeting besides other workers, Barnabas, a Greek-Jewish convert to the Messianic beliefs of the community. But as in Damascus, so here in Jerusalem he, by his disputations engendered antipathy among the Jews, much to the consternation of the apostles who successfully persuaded him to leave the city. Returning to his native town, Tarsus, he is not heard of again for ten years.

If now we ask, just what was involved in his conversion, the answer is not far to seek. It involved above all else a new view of the crucifixion of Jesus. Prior to his conversion, the crucifixion signified the just punishment inflicted on an impostor; now it meant a God-ordained mode of bringing all who were estranged from Him into at-one-ment with Himself. Sacrifice, ac-

[1] Cf. Acts 9:14–31 with Gal. 1:16–18 and II. Cor. 2:32–33.

cording to a long-established Jewish conception, was the sole medium by which this supreme desideratum could be reached and the supreme sacrifice of history was that of Jesus on the cross. Again, the "vision" on the way to Damascus made Paul certain that Jesus had risen "from the dead." [1] The cross and the resurrection—these were the cardinal beliefs that now engaged him, together with the corollary, the Messiahship of Jesus.

In other words, his conversion involved the transition from Judaism to Nazarenism, if so we may designate the position of the primitive community in Jerusalem.

But now we have to ask what caused him to take *a further step* and inaugurate a new religion? For Nazarenism, we have seen, was merely a sect of Judaism. What was it that made Paul feel dissatisfied with the theological position taken by the primitive community? What was it that led him to dispense with the requirements of the Jewish Law and take his stand exclusively on faith in the crucified and risen Christ as the sole and all-sufficing means of salvation? The answer is furnished by re-

[1] See my "Life of Jesus," chap. VII, for the difference between resurrection *from the dead* and *from the grave.*

verting to that woeful spiritual experience of his youth and early manhood, so frankly laid bare in the seventh chapter of his epistle to the Romans. A most painful experience it was, for there is no physical pain to be compared to the stings and pangs of a conscience wounded beyond healing, no pain like that which comes to a man when he climbs up into the heights of his nobler nature and looks down with sorrowful contempt upon his baser self. Recall the apostle's confession of utter wretchedness when he found he could not fulfil the Law of Righteousness. "For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin." Remember that in Paul's time the Pentateuchal rules and regulations governing the conduct of life had been considerably amplified by Talmudic injunctions. Educated as a Pharisee, Paul was trained to be scrupulously faithful to the requirements of this mass of ordinances. But they soon proved to be a terrible burden and bondage, albeit, as he felt, God had imposed them on man for the wise purpose of sustaining in him the consciousness of sin. Paul had struggled long and hard to satisfy the demands of the Law, and the result was an overwhelming sense of moral impotency. Over

and against the Law of God, as revealed in the Pentateuch, stood the promptings of the flesh, bringing man into captivity to the law of sin which is in his members. Who shall deliver him from this slavery to sin, who endow him with moral power to fulfil the Law of Righteousness, who lift him from his dead self to higher things? Assuredly but one person can be equal to the fulfilment of so august a function, one, namely, who has succeeded where he had failed. Only such an one can give the needed help. Is there such a person? Reflecting on this question Paul ultimately reached the conclusion that inasmuch as Jesus *had* fulfilled the Law of Righteousness he differed from all other human beings in *kind* as well as in *degree* and was, in truth, the Son of God, endowed, in a preëxistent state, with a peculiar dignity, veiled during his earthly humiliation, yet evidenced by his resurrection from the dead; a man of heavenly origin, he was one who had sacrificed the glory of being with the Father who, through him, was now reconciling the world to Himself.[1] Paul did not trouble his mind with the source of this Sonship; that seemed a fruitless speculation. Enough for

[1] Gal. 4:4; I. Cor. 15:47; Gal. 3:21

him to start with the cross and the resurrection and let all else be inference. From the crucified and risen Jesus, the preëxistent Messiah, who will shortly appear in the clouds attended by angels and come down to usher in the heavenly kingdom on earth, from him, Paul thought, he could borrow the righteousness needed to save him from "the wrath to come."

Just here it will be worth our while to recall the fundamental difference in the attitude of Jesus and Paul toward the moral nature of man. Both entertained the conviction that confession of moral imperfection is the first step toward moral progress. But whereas Jesus was buoyed up by the consciousness of boundless possibilities for improvement resident in each human soul, Paul was overpowered by the sense of moral impotency. So deep-seated was Jesus' belief in the latent moral power of man that he could bid his hearers "be perfect." Paul, on the other hand, despairing of moral progress, looked for a righteousness not his own and on which he could draw. Jesus, surcharged with the feeling of unexhausted spiritual capacity in human souls, preached a gospel of repentance and moral endeavor. "Do the Divine will,"

"strive to enter in," "repent," is his ringing appeal. Paul, holding that man is inherently evil, a slave to sin, constitutionally incapacitated for fulfilling the Law of Righteousness, raised the passionate question, "Who can endow me with what I do not and cannot possess? Who can lift me from my low estate? for how to perform that which is good I know not. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the bondage of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ."

And when Paul raised the further question, "*How* can I borrow of the superabundant righteousness of the Christ?" the answer was, "by faith." But we shall miss his meaning here if we construe the word faith as having primarily, or chiefly, an intellectual content. On the contrary, faith meant for Paul a mystical process of achieving at-one-ment with the Christ. Again and again in his letters does he define his conception of faith as a fixing of one's thought and gaze on this object of supreme veneration, the risen Christ, becoming assimilated to Him, wrapping oneself about with Him, as with a cloak, letting Him so dominate thought, feeling and conduct that one does nothing of oneself, but only and always through Him, the

celestial, archetypal, exceptional, divine Man.[1]

What further need, then, of Levitical sacrifices, now that the supreme and all-sufficing sacrifice has been made? What further need of the Law, now that this Divine grace has been vouchsafed to us, whereby we are saved through faith? Well enough for the little boy to have a companion-tutor during his tender years, but once old enough to go to school, let him be turned over to the master, and dispense with the pedagogue. So also was it well enough for the Jews in the childhood-period of their development to have had the Law—a pedagogue; but now that they have entered on the manhood-stage, let the Law lead them to the Master Christ, as did the pedagogue the boy to the master of the school. Hence Paul's expression: "The Law was our pedagogue[2] bringing us unto Christ?"[3] Having discovered by actual personal experience that he could not, of himself, fulfil the Law, Paul was forced to ask, "What shall I do to be saved?" And he found an answer in this theory of Jesus as the "second Adam," the preëxistent Messiah, from whose superabund-

[1] For typical passages consult: Gal. 2:20; Rom. 6:8; Rom. 13:14.

[2] Mistranslated "schoolmaster." [3] Gal. 3:24.

ant righteousness every needy soul could, through faith, borrow, and whose sacrifice on the cross made salvation possible for all. Thus did Paul *complete* the partial break with Judaism effected by the apostles of the primitive community and create a new religious fellowship on the basis of belief in Jesus' death as the *sole* and *all-sufficing* means of salvation. For, it must not be forgotten that the apostles in Jerusalem never went the length of Paul's argument on the question of salvation. They saw no necessity of dispensing with obedience to the Law. They never construed the death of Jesus as signifying anything more than a merely *supplemental* means of salvation. To them the Law was still the supreme consideration, indispensable to salvation. They knew that Jesus had not disregarded the Law. How then could it be incumbent on his disciples to abrogate it? And the proof of this radical difference between their viewpoint and that of Paul is furnished by the record of the great controversy which occurred at Jerusalem in the year 51. The events leading up to this controversy have been reported in the Book of Acts and in Paul's letter to the Galatians. Here, again, the narratives are somewhat conflicting,

but the probable sequence of events may be outlined somewhat in this fashion.

During the decade following Paul's return to Tarsus from Jerusalem, there had been organized at Antioch a successful Messianic community. Antioch was the chief city of Syria and ranked next to Rome and Alexandria among the great cities of the then known world. This Syrian Church had been formed by fugitives from the persecution that followed the death of Stephen. Here a liberal, catholic movement had been inaugurated, making the Jerusalem church, which had ministered only to Jews, realize, as never before, that the gospel must be universalized, that Messiah's heritage must be for Gentiles as well as for Jews. Here was a church with a distinct consciousness of its independence of the mother-church at Jerusalem, yet on altogether friendly terms with it. Hither Paul came in the year 45, in response to the urgent appeal of the Jerusalem authorities, conveyed to him by Barnabas, the Greek-Jewish convert whom he had met in Jerusalem. And now the center of religious interest shifts from Jerusalem to Antioch and from Jewish to Gentile converts. The name "Christian," too, is originated and as a nickname wherewith un-

sympathetic Gentiles, mistaking the meaning of the word, described the adherents of Paul's views.[1] Just as the word "Herodian" is derived from Herod, so, thought these unconverted Gentiles, "Christian" is derived from Christ as a proper name. But Christ, as we have already observed, is only the Greek equivalent for the Hebrew Messiah, meaning the "anointed one." Hearing Paul's followers speak of Christ as their Lord they supposed the reference was to the name of a person, whereas it is only the title of an office, indicating the rank of Jesus as monarch of the heavenly kingdom soon to come on the earth. Eventually the name was adopted by the Christians themselves as a badge of honor. The notion that the name was first used by Jews is untenable because they certainly would have stultified themselves had they described the Antioch community by a name which means "those of the Messiah," which the members assuredly were *not* in the estimation of the Jews. After spending a most successful year in this new field of labor Paul started on the first of a series of missionary tours, going through Cyprus and parts of Asia Minor. On his return he found the Antioch church in great com-

[1] Acts 11:26.

motion. The mother-church, learning of Paul's success, became suspicious and sent a delegation to investigate the rumor that Greeks were being admitted to fellowship in the Syrian church without first being circumcised and that Jews and Gentiles were sitting together at table and eating the same food—practices that involved flagrant violation of the Levitical Law. This interference on the part of the parent organization was strongly resented by Paul "and no small dissention and disputation followed," as he himself has told us.[1] Indeed it was found necessary to have the issue settled at once. In other words, a crisis had occurred in the evolution of Christianity. Is that evolution from Judaism to stop at the inconsistent position adopted by the Jerusalem apostles, who insisted on obedience to the Law as indispensable to salvation, notwithstanding the sacrifice Jesus had made for the saving of souls; or is that evolution to proceed to the only logical and consistent view of salvation, represented by the Apostle to the Gentiles? So Paul went down to Jerusalem to argue the question out with Peter, James, and John, the chief representatives of the mother-church. Paul took the ground: (1)

[1] Cor. 10:10, 11; 3:13, 15.

that if circumcision be still insisted upon as a requisite for admission, then Jesus, the Christ, might as well have lived on instead of giving his life as a sacrifice for humanity; (2) that the Old Testament could no longer have binding authority since *Jesus* had come into the world; (3) that Jews and Greeks stood on a level of equality in the community; (4) that to return to Mosaic rites as media of salvation after Jesus had been crucified was to pass from freedom to bondage and, finally (5) that belief in Jesus as the sole savior of mankind is all that could be required of anyone seeking fellowship in the new community.

The result of the conference was a compromise. It was agreed that the Jerusalem church should hold to its conservative position and that Paul should minister in his own chosen way to the church at Antioch on condition that he take up a collection to aid the struggling Judean churches.[1] In the year 47, famine fell upon this district and the Antioch church promptly sent relief, Paul and Barnabas taking money to the Judean sufferers. Thus while Paul and his followers at Antioch were sustaining a Christian Church in disre-

[1] Gal. 2:10.

gard of Pentateuchal ceremonialism, Peter, James, and John conducted the Jerusalem organization in loyal allegiance to the ordinances of the Law. Thus the real issue was evaded, viz., Is obedience to the Law essential to salvation? So Paul returned to Antioch to continue his work there in the same liberal spirit in which he had begun. A second missionary journey is soon thereafter undertaken, this time chiefly in Macedonia and Greece. During Paul's absence, Peter, wishing to show that no ill-feeling exists, visits the Antioch brethren, sits with them at table and freely partakes of their food. While fellowshipping thus with the Gentile community, Peter is suddenly surprised by the advent of fellow-members from Jerusalem. On seeing them he immediately withdrew from the Gentile circle and persuaded Barnabas to withdraw also. Just then Paul returned and learning what had transpired, his indignation was roused to an extreme pitch. He characterized Peter's conduct as sheer hypocrisy and "withstood him to the face," saying, "If thou being a Jew livest after the manner of the Gentiles why compellest thou the Gentiles to live after the manner of the Jews?" [1] In other words, if Peter's Jewish ways

[1] Gal. 2:4, 6, 9, 11, 14.

are not necessary for fellowship or salvation, he acts the part of a hypocrite; if they are necessary "then has Christ died in vain." Such was the cardinal issue involved in Paul's remonstrance. The crucifixion is meaningless if the Law be still insisted on as a requisite for salvation. But this idea was new to Peter who had never thought out the logic of his belief in Jesus, and who could not entertain the idea that God had opened a new door to salvation other than the Law of Moses. Paul, on the other hand, was a trained thinker and saw that there could be no permanency in the compromise adopted at Jerusalem. The question had to be definitely settled. Can one be saved without submission to Jewish ceremonial? To have people in Palestine believing this impossible while others of the same fellowship at Antioch believed it possible was obviously doomed to divide the household of faith, all the more so as free-thinking, liberal-minded Greeks would not look with favor either on the acceptance of Jewish ceremonialism or on the illogical position represented by the Jerusalem community. And so, while Paul and his fellow-workers were spreading Christianity and establishing churches in the leading centers of Asia Minor,

Greece and Rome, the primitive community was at a standstill in Jerusalem. And when, in the year 70, Titus besieged the city and burned the temple, the primitive community was left without a center and obliged to flee to Pella, a Gentile town across the Jordan. There the organization gradually disintegrated and was heard of no more. Had Paul ignored the Jerusalem church instead of coming to an understanding with its representatives he would have jeopardized his own success and the cause for which he stood. Paul was wise enough to see that it would not do to cut loose from the traditions of the life and death of Jesus associated with Jerusalem; wise enough also to recognize the fact that the Antioch church was a step-child of the mother-church. Thus he secured for the new religion continuity with the past while proclaiming it a religion in which there was neither Jew nor Gentile, neither bond nor free, because all were one in Christ who made the atoning sacrifice in the benefits of which all humanity might share.

VI

"THE SHEPHERD" OF HERMAS
OR
ADAPTATION TO RELIGIOUS ENVIRONMENT

We have seen that the New Testament is fairly saturated with the Messianic expectation, with the belief that the then existing world would soon pass away and be replaced by a new and divinely ordained order of society, the kingdom of God. No unbiased reader of the New Testament books can fail to realize that this expectation was the background of Christian thinking throughout the first century and a half of our era. But the great catastrophic change, for which Jesus and his disciples so earnestly waited, did not come as they believed it would, in the generation to which they belonged. One after another the disciples passed away and still the looked-for transformation did not occur. Day after day the fervent prayer was offered, "Thy kingdom come," but

in vain. Small wonder, then, that many a believer grew weary of his unanswered prayers and disappointed hope. Nor is there anywhere in the New Testament a more touching and pathetic passage than that which we read in the latest of its books, written about the year 150, the passage in which the unknown author cites the mocking inquiry of scoffers, "Where is the promise of His coming, for, since the fathers fell asleep, all things remain as they were from the beginning?" And the writer's rejoinder is to the effect that God is exceeding patient and long-suffering and would not that a single soul be excluded from membership in the coming kingdom to perish in the impending destruction of the world that is. "Wait," therefore, "possess your souls in patience," for, according to the Divine reckoning, "a thousand years are as a day." Marvel not that Messiah-Jesus has not yet come and abandon not faith and hope.[1] Gradually, however, in actual practice, if not in attenuated theory, men did give up hope and ceased to look for that kingdom in which sin, suffering, poverty and death would be no more. They addressed themselves to the vital task of adjustment to their disappointment. They

[1] II. Peter 3:4 *et seq*

turned to shaping their civil and religious life anew, in accordance with non-fulfilment of the Messianic hope. In other words, the failure of Jesus to return, as expected, created a new problem: how to adapt to a society that did *not* undergo transformation, ethical teachings, a "way of living and forms of church organization based on the belief that this metamorphosis was close at hand. In our study of the primitive community at Jerusalem we saw how the life of the members was literally rooted in enthusiasm over the coming of Jesus, how they lived, then and there, as they felt they were going to live in the new kingdom. Under the spell of that enthusiasm they naturally conducted their religious affairs with a minimum of ecclesiastical machinery; they dispensed with official and formal tests of fellowship, admitting to membership all who, like themselves, were enthusiastic for Jesus and the kingdom; they spent no money on church-buildings or on ceremonial appliances; they took no thought for the morrow; they gave freely of what they had to the poor and needy; they who were single were advised to remain unmarried, and they who contemplated divorce, to abandon the thought. For, why engage in any of these purposes, see-

ing that the end of the world is so close at hand and that at any moment Messiah-Jesus may appear and bring in the perfect Day? What justification could there be for spending time, money and labor in constructing an ecclesiastical edifice, or in organizing an ecclesiastical hierarchy under conditions like these? But when, after a century of watching and waiting, the world showed no signs of coming to an end, there arose the practical problem of accommodating to a world which did not disappear, a mode of living, a body of moral precepts and a form of religious organization, all designed for a *temporary* order of society. How to improve the persisting world, now that the miraculous establishment of a new one seemed increasingly unlikely; how to make the vision of the kingdom of God practical and helpful, now that it seemed doomed to *remain* a vision; how to make the world men actually lived in like the city of their dream; *this* was the supreme problem confronting Christians toward the middle of the second century.

Very fortunate we are in possessing a book which deals directly with this problem and the manner in which it was solved; a book that gives us a glimpse of the *process* of adjustment

as it was worked out in one of the Western Churches, the Church at Rome. Assuredly no other book, issuing from the middle of the second century, helps us, as does this one, to understand how the inevitable changes in Christian life, doctrine, and organization, consequent upon non-fulfilment of the Messianic hope, were brought about. Here it is that we see how the primitive Christian theory of baptism was modified to meet the requirements of a society that remained unchanged; how the democracy that characterized religious assemblies in the first century gave place to the rulings of an "episcopacy," in the second; how, one after another, moral and religious issues, closed for a supposed temporary order of society, were later reopened and resettled to suit the situation that confronted sceptical and disappointed Christians. This book which ranks second to none as a source of information on this crucial period in the evolution of Christianity is "The Shepherd," of Hermas.

Hermas was an emancipated Roman slave and brother of Bishop[1] Pius of Rome, as we

[1] The title "papa"=father=pope, was not applied to the bishop at Rome as head of the church and hierarchy until the fifth century, by Leo I. In 1073 Hildebrand (Gregory VII) forbade the use of the title by any other than the Roman

learn from the "Muratorian" canon.[1] He was, moreover, a "prophet"[2] and wrote, as he believed, under inspiration of the Holy Ghost. He claimed to speak and write "by revelation," to have "the gift of prophecy" and was thus in the same class with Agabus[3] (who predicted a famine and secured assistance from the church at Antioch for the suffering brethren in Jerusalem) and with those men who told Paul that "in every city bonds and affliction awaited him."

Hermas found his chief source of edification not, as we might suppose, in the Scriptures, but in the "angel of prophecy" who, in the guise of a shepherd, accompanied him. Having been converted to Christianity from the Roman religion, he had little familiarity with the Old Testament; indeed he quotes from it but once.[4] And while his acquaintance with the New Testament is quite marked, especially with the Epistle of James and the gospel-record, it is significant that he avoids the names "Jesus" and "Christ," using instead "Son of God." It would seem that, like Paul, his interest was not so

bishop. Prior to the fifth century it had been used to signify the bishop of any Christian church.

[1] See Lecture I, p. 24. [2] See I. Cor. 12:28. [3] Acts 11:28.
[4] Vis. II:3.

much in Jesus the Galilean teacher and healer as in the crucified and risen Lord, the heavenly Man, the preëxistent Messiah. And though the Fourth Gospel was not known to Hermas, his conception of the spirit of Jesus as having entered the world to weed out the transgressions of men and bring them into oneness with God is quite in accord with what we read there, suggesting that both writers drew on the "Wisdom"[1] literature of the "Apocrypha," in which the germ of the conception appears.

"The Shepherd" was written in Greek and, according to the consensus of opinion, close to the year 140. The book is an apocalypse, or book of revelations, and is divided into three parts: Visions, Similitudes, or Parables, and Mandates, or Commandments. Though entitled "The Shepherd" the allusion is not, as might be supposed, to Jesus. In the fifth of his Visions Hermas explains that the shepherd is an angel, "the angel of repentance," who came to him in the guise of a shepherd, to serve as his spiritual guide, to advise him touching the requirements of Christian life and to interpret for him his Visions. "After I had been praying there entered a man of glorious aspect, dressed like a

[1] Wisd. of Sol. 7:23–27.

shepherd, with a white goat's skin, a wallet on his shoulders and a rod in his hand, and saluted me. I returned his salutation. And straightway he sat down beside me and said: 'I have been sent by a most venerable angel to dwell with you the remaining days of your life; I am that shepherd to whom you have been intrusted.' And while he yet spoke his figure was changed, and then I knew it was he to whom I had been intrusted. And straightway I became confused and fear took hold of me. But he said to me: 'Do not be confounded, but receive strength from the commandments which I am going to give you. Write down my commandments and similitudes that you may be able to read them and to keep them.' Then I wrote down exactly as he had ordered me. All these words did the shepherd, even the angel of repentance, command me to write." [1] Thus the part played by the Shepherd in this Apocalypse was not unlike that of Virgil in the Divine Comedy. The book bears some resemblance to Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," and the same popularity which that allegorical work enjoyed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was accorded "The Shepherd" in the third and fourth

[1] Vis. V.

centuries—witness, for example, the warm debates between Tertullian and his contemporaries over the right of this book to be regarded as "scripture."

For a long time it was supposed that the author of this primitive Christian allegory was the Hermas mentioned by Paul in his letter to the Romans.[1] And because of the assumption that it was written by a co-worker of Paul the book acquired a canonical value, i. e., it was ranked as scripture, as religious literature suitable for public reading in church. In other words, it met that test of apostolic origin which, as we have already seen,[2] determined the right of a book to a place in the "canon" of scripture. And since the gospels of Mark and Luke and the epistles of Paul, though not strictly of apostolic origin, were yet admitted because of the loose construction put upon that standard, so "The Shepherd," by reason of its supposed Pauline relation, was incorporated in the canon. So distinguished a representative of early Christianity as Irenæus, bishop of Lyons, regarded the book as inspired and quoted from it as of equal rank with the gospels. Origen and Clement of Alexandria took practically the

[1] Rom. 16:14. [2] See Lecture I, p. 22.

same view, as did also the compiler of the "Sinaitic" manuscript. Here we find "The Shepherd" placed between "Revelation" and the "Epistle of Barnabas," thus proving that as late as the year 350 the present make-up of the New Testament had not yet been decided upon. Nay, more, so popular was "The Shepherd" that even after the official ruling of Pope Gelasius, in 405, editions of the New Testament continued to appear in which this allegory was given a place. The maker of the "Muratorian" canon considered it worthy to be read as "edifying" but not as "authoritative" and therefore not to be ranked among the prophets "or the writings of the apostles" which, in his judgment, were truly canonical works.

Hermas was at once a progressive thinker and a practical reformer. He wished to lead the faith of the past on to the faith of the future, to effect the transition from the beliefs and practices maintained in the first century, when faith in the speedy advent of the kingdom was strong and glowing, to those necessitated by the non-fulfilment of the Messianic hope. Especially noteworthy is the combination of wisdom and skill exhibited by Hermas in carrying out his purpose. Like other practical re-

formers he realized that if one is to get the ear of the public and achieve success one must not attempt too much. Enough to express advanced ideas in old-fashioned form without striving to make the language fully express the new order of thought. In the words of Professor Lake, to whose article in the *Harvard Theological Review* reference has already been made, "Human nature will often listen to a reformer who wishes to change either the appearance or the substance of his reform, but not to one who attacks both simultaneously. One generation alters the substance, but leaves the appearance; the next sees the inconsistency and changes the appearance as well. It takes two generations to complete the process, and that is reform; if the attempt be made to do both at once, it becomes revolution." No one can read "The Shepherd" without feeling that some such diagnosis of the conditions on which progress depends must have been made by Hermas before he broached his new ideas on baptism, church government and other vital issues of his day. For, instead of clothing his thought in direct forms of speech, he resorts to a long-established, universally accepted and eminently popular mode of literary expression, the apocalypse. Enough for him to

present the new order of thought in veiled and visionary form; let the next generation address itself to furnishing explicit, adequate, unveiled modes of expression.

See how tactfully Hermas proceeded in the task he set himself of adapting to an old and unchanged environment, practices, beliefs, rites and modes of church organization intended for a world that would last but a little while. Take, for example, the rite of baptism which, for the Christian, was at once a symbol and a means of purification, an evidence of the convert's fitness for membership in the coming kingdom and the guarantee of permanent release from sin, because, in that kingdom, there could be no sin. That Hermas was in entire accord with this theory of baptism is evidenced in the ninth of his Similitudes. Here the interpreting shepherd explains to him his vision of "the tower founded on a rock in the midst of waters." It represents the church, while the stones composing it are the *new* chosen people, they who have been brought through the gate (Messiah-Jesus) and through the water (baptism) to be built into the tower. Only through this gate can they who are to be saved enter into the Kingdom of God. "No one shall enter except he receive (in bap-

tism) the name of the Son."[1] Similarly in the third of the "Visions" we read: "Your life shall be saved by water." And again in the ninth Similitude Hermas declares that "before a man bears the name of the Son of God he is dead, but after he receives it he puts off mortality and receives life. He descends into the water dead, and arises from it alive; for till he receive (the rite) he is dead." These quotations confirm the statement that Hermas shared the view of baptism current in the second century, according to which that rite assures admission to the Kingdom and also absolute escape from sin. In other words, these early Christians had dared "to think in absolutes" because they believed the kingdom was very near. But protracted delay in its advent gave opportunity for the discovery that baptism did *not,* of necessity, keep a man safe from sin. And this discovery was all the more appalling because of the belief that sin committed *after* baptism was unforgivable.[2] Thus there arose the need of modifying this view of baptism which had been formulated on the assumption that the world was very soon to come to an end. They who had been baptized, it was thought, would not have time to sin, let

[1] Sim. 9:12. [2] Heb. 6:4–6.

alone inclination. Given the beneficent influence of the rite, sinlessness could be guaranteed for so brief an interval as would elapse till the end of the world. But it did not end. An unanticipated situation confronted the Christian world, calling for adaptation to environment of a rite designed for a society that remained unchanged. Thus the question was raised, Are these unfortunates who have sinned since they were baptized doomed to live on without hope of redemption? and Hermas answers in terms of a "revelation" made to him by the shepherd-angel. He has revealed to Hermas the saving truth that God in His infinite mercy, remembering that the powers and wiles of the devil are very great, has vouchsafed to the baptized sinner *one more* opportunity to repent and be saved. Thus a crisis in the development of Christian theology was successfully met. Nor does anything more conclusively prove the important place held by baptism in early Christianity than the fact that Hermas wrote his "Shepherd" for the express purpose of setting forth this act of Divine beneficence by which repentance and salvation were made possible for those who, after baptism, had fallen from grace.[1] That "revelation"

[1] Mand. IV:3.

served to adjust to conditions as they were in Hermas' day a theory of baptism designed for an order of society that was soon to disappear. In the fourth of the Mandates Hermas states both the old accepted view of baptism and the form of its adjustment to the observed facts of experience. Says Hermas to the Shepherd, the angel of repentance, "I have heard, sir, that there is no other repentance than that one when we went down into the water and received remission of our former sins." But the angel, while admitting the truth of the statement, explains that hereafter one extra and final chance for repentance is to be granted to those who sin after their baptism. Replying to Hermas the angel said: "That was sound doctrine which you heard, for that is really the case. For he who has received remission of his sins *ought not* to sin any more, but to live in purity. Since, however, you inquire diligently in all things, I will point out this also to you. The Lord, knowing the heart and foreknowing all things, knew the weakness of men and the manifold wiles of the devil, that he would inflict some evil on the servants of God. The Lord, therefore, being merciful, has had mercy on the work of His hand and has set repentance for them, but He has

intrusted to me power over this repentance. Therefore I say unto you, if anyone is tempted of the devil and sins (after baptism) he has opportunity to repent but once." And Hermas said, "Sir, I feel that life has come back to me, for I know I shall be saved if in future I sin no more."[1] Thus Hermas, without surrendering the popular theory of baptism, modified it to suit a situation unprovided for in the accepted theory of baptism, based as it was on the belief that Messiah-Jesus would in the very near future return and thus preclude the possibility of baptized persons falling again into sin.

Until Hermas came forward with this revised view of baptism it had grown customary for men to postpone the ceremony as long as possible on the ground that sin committed after baptism is unforgivable. But some delayed the matter too long and died without being baptized, thus excluding themselves from the possibility of admission into the new kingdom. Hermas, therefore, feels called upon to register his disapproval of such deferment. Of these people who seek to avoid the responsibilities of baptism by postponing the rite he says: "Do you wish to know who those men were that fell near to the

[1] Vis. II:4.

waters (baptism), but could not be rolled into them? These are they who heard the Word and wished to be baptized in the name of the Lord, but when the chastity demanded came into their recollection they drew back and again walked after their wicked desires." And Hermas asked: "Is repentance possible to these that have been cast away and do not fit into the building of the tower (church) and will they yet have a place in this tower?" To which the answer was given: "Repentance is yet possible, but in this tower they cannot find a suitable place. But in another and far inferior place they will be laid, and that, too, only when they have been tortured and completed the days of their sins."[1] Here is a conception which, as Prof. Lake has pointed out, on the one hand led to development of the doctrine of purgatory and, on the other, to the practice of infant baptism.[2]

Just as the belief that sin after baptism is unforgivable led to the postponement of the ceremony with a view to escaping the danger involved, so the belief that baptism releases from sin led to the pernicious and false assumption that once baptized, all subsequent conduct, however unethical, could in no way annul the

[1] Vis. III:7 [2] Lake, Op. cit., p. 30.

saving efficacy of the rite. And precisely as Hermas protested against the former error so he set himself in opposition to the latter, repudiating and denouncing the attitude of those who sought to construe baptism as devoid of direct relation to the moral life. He insists that, bound up with baptism, as an inalienable element, is the desire and endeavor to live the moral life and that by no cunning device can morality be separated from religion. Read the transparent allegory in which Hermas clothes his thought: He sees twelve maidens surrounding the tower and the shepherd tells him they are "holy spirits" and "that no man can be found in the kingdom except they clothe him in their raiment." For, "if a man receive only the name and not the raiment" it profits him nothing. "These maidens," he continues, "are the powers of the Son of God." "If thou bear the name but bear not the power of God, in vain shalt thou bear the name. The stones (members) thou sawest cast away, these bare only the name, but put not on the clothing of the maidens. Whosoever beareth the name of the Son of God ought to bear also the names of these maidens, for their names are their raiment—Faith, Continency, Strength, Patience, Simplicity, Inno-

cence, Purity, Joy, Truth, Prudence, Concord, Love." [1]

It was, then, a great service that Hermas rendered his generation at a critical moment of its religious life. Obviously, the existing theory of baptism had to be adapted to the needs of a society which, it was supposed, would pass away, but which continued as it had been "since the fathers fell asleep." Messiah-Jesus did not return, the kingdom did not come, baptism did not secure *permanent* release from sin. The plan to make bad men absolutely good, at a single stroke, by baptism, in a world about to disappear, had to be reshaped into an attempt to make bad men better in a world that showed no signs of undergoing the expected transformation. Whereas Christians in the first century expected the speedy coming of the kingdom of God and based their theory of baptism, as releasing converts from sin, upon that expectation, the Christians of the second century, for whom that mighty hope had waned, found that baptism furnished no guarantee of sinlessness and hence were obliged so to adjust their theory that it would accord with the observed facts, a task in which they were helped by Hermas as

[1] Sim. 9:12.

by no other reformer of the time. By submitting to his readers the consoling revelation of a post-baptismal opportunity for repentance he held out hope for those who had sinned after their conversion. By insisting on moral conduct as an indispensable requisite for salvation and exposing the fallacy of the supposition that baptism assured membership in the Kingdom regardless of the "raiment" subsequently worn, Hermas infused ethical content into the doctrine. By incorporating into his allegory his own personal struggle to live the moral life he strengthened the force of his appeal, particularly in those passages that relate to keeping oneself *free* from sin after baptism, a task that for him was difficult in the extreme. His imagination, he said, was given to evil and his tongue could not always tell the truth. In his frank confessions he reminds us many times of the seventh chapter in Paul's epistle to the Romans. But Hermas, unlike Paul, relied upon the higher nature within him to lead him in the paths of righteousness. For he went so far as to symbolize his higher self by an angel, the soul of all that was glad and good and strong in the man. This angel, in the form of a shepherd, the "angel of repentance," it was who told him he could

avoid sin if only he fervently resolved so to do. And his Apocalypse closes with the picture of a pilgrim, who, despite all the obstacles that beset his way, presses bravely on his journey, cheered by the conviction that God's mercy is abundant unto those who repent.

As a further illustration of the way in which Hermas adjusted to a permanent order of society what was enjoined for one supposed to pass away, let me cite his treatment of the marriage and divorce question. Paul had discouraged the man who put away his adulterous wife from marrying again on the ground that the kingdom is coming very soon. Therefore, the time being short, the best a man can do is to devote his total energy to preparation for entrance into the new order of society. "Art thou loosed from a wife, seek not another, for, brethren, the time is short."[1] But the expected kingdom did not come. On the contrary, "all things continued as they were from the beginning." Hence a new and adequate reason had to be given those who entertained the idea of remarrying. Hermas, without reflecting in the least upon the credibility of Paul's position, furnished what was required. The rejected wife,

[1] I. Cor. 7-27-29.

he said, may repent of her sin, and the husband should therefore not remarry but anticipate her repentance and let her return to him when she does repent. For, continued Hermas, it would be a grievous sin indeed were she to repent and her husband not be in a position to receive her again. Nor must it be overlooked that what Hermas says on this subject is plainly applied to both men and women. The passage in which he discusses this point reads as follows:

"Sir, if anyone has a wife who trusts in the Lord and if he detect her in adultery, does the man sin if he continue to live with her? And he (the shepherd-angel) said to me, 'As long as he remains ignorant of her sin the husband commits no transgression in living with her. But if the husband knows his wife has gone astray and if the woman does not repent but persists in her fornication and yet the husband continues to live with her, he also is guilty of her crime and a sharer in her adultery.' And Hermas said, 'What, then, is the husband to do if his wife continue her wicked practices?' And the angel said: 'The husband should put her away and remain by himself. But if he put her away and marry another he also commits adultery.' And Hermas said: 'What if the woman put away

should repent and wish to return to her husband; shall she not be taken back?' 'Assuredly,' said he, 'if the husband do not take her back he sins, for he ought to take back the sinner who has repented, but not frequently. For there is but one repentance to the servants of God. In case, therefore, that the divorced wife repent, the husband ought not to marry another when his wife has been put away. And in this matter man and woman are to be treated in exactly the same way.' "[1]

The same service of adjusting to existing conditions what was intended for a state of society supposed to be only temporary appears again in the contribution of Hermas to the new problems of church organization. We have seen how enthusiasm over the expected return of Jesus caused the primitive community at Jerusalem to manage its affairs with a minimum of government. Simplicity and democracy were its conspicuous marks; witness the way in which the substitute for Judas was elected, or that in which the appointment of seven men to serve as dispensers of charity was effected. No one of the apostles stood above all the rest, but a thoroughly democratic spirit and mode of procedure

[1] Mand. IV:1–8.

prevailed among them. There was, in truth, no time for questions of priority, or rank, or detailed organization. The hour of the coming of Messiah-Jesus was so near at hand that thought and energy had to be expended on matters of most vital moment, such as preaching repentance and saving the largest possible number of souls in the brief time that remained before the last judgment would be pronounced. Accordingly we observe that the terms presbyter, elder, bishop were used interchangeably to designate the officer who supervised the affairs of a church. There was as yet no *fixed* division of functions. Why should there be, seeing that the end of the world was momentarily expected? But, as year after year passed with no sign of the great consummation and the work of the churches was steadily increasing, it became apparent that the simple, democratic type of organization intended for a very brief period was inadequate to meet the needs of the sub-apostolic age to which Hermas belonged and which was an unexpected continuation of the preceding age. Here again, then, non-fulfilment of the Messianic expectation gave rise to a new problem. And, again, the solution emanated from Hermas. The immediate occasion for the dis-

placement of the primitive *parity* of position by rank and distinctions was the appearance in the community of "false prophets," men akin to the "smooth-talkers" of whom Jeremiah so bitterly complained, prophets whose prime concern was to predict only what would please their patrons, men whose eyes were on the fee rather than on the truth. The questions arose: Why are there any false prophets? How can you tell a true from a false prophet? In the eleventh Mandate we have the answer of Hermas: "He (the Shepherd) pointed out to me some men sitting on a seat and one on a chair. And he says to me, 'Do you see the persons sitting on the seat?' 'I do, sir,' said I. 'These,' says he, 'are the faithful and he who sits on the chair is a false prophet ruining the minds of the servants of God. It is the doubters, not the faithful, that he ruins. These doubters go to him as to a soothsayer, and he, the false prophet, not having the power of a Divine spirit within him, answers them according to their wicked desires. For, being empty himself, he gives empty answers to empty inquirers; for the devil fills him with his own spirit. He who inquires of a false prophet is an idolater and devoid of the truth and foolish. For no spirit given by God re-

quires to be asked but speaks all things of itself, for it proceeds from God.' 'How, then, sir,' said I, 'will a man know which of them is a prophet and which a false prophet?' 'I will tell you,' said he. 'Try the man who has the Divine spirit by his life. First, he who has the Divine spirit is meek, peaceable, humble; he refrains from all iniquity and contents himself with fewer wants than those of other men. But the man who *seems* to have the spirit exalts himself, wishes to have the first seat, is bold, impudent, talkative, lives in the midst of luxuries and takes rewards for his prophecies; and if he does not secure remuneration he does not prophesy.' "[1]

Hermas held that both types are inspired, but that the *sources* of their inspiration are different. The false prophets have the wrong kind. Theirs issues from the Devil and his subordinate evil spirits; the others, from God's good spirits. For the world is full of both types of spirits and the evil ones are ever ready to take possession of prophets—a belief inherited directly from Judaism and indirectly from Zoroastrianism, the fountain source of much biblical angelology and demonology.

As to detecting the difference between the

[1] Mand. XI.

true and the false prophets, Hermas advised "watching their behavior," a means of differentiation which had already been published in the gospel according to Matthew. "Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are as ravening wolves, full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness," " By their fruits shall ye know men."[1] Similarly, in the Didache,[2] a document contemporary with "The Shepherd," a corresponding conduct-test (for apostles) is proposed. The way to tell a true from a false apostle is by observing the length of his stay in a town whither he has gone to preach. His business as a missionary is to keep moving, to carry his message to as many places as possible. If, therefore, he remain more than two nights in that town set him down a false apostle.[3]

But there remained the further question, not raised by Hermas: Who shall judge the conduct of prophets? The answer had already been given by Ignatius and by Clement of Rome, viz., the bishop, or presbyter—he shall decide which prophets are true and which false. Thus the need of solving this perplexing problem gave rise to hierarchical distinctions des-

[1] Matt. 7:15–20. [2] See Lecture II, p. 48. [3] 11:3 *et seq.*

tined to be developed, in the course of succeeding centuries, into the Roman papacy. To quote again from Professor Lake: "The subjection of prophets to bishops was the beginning of that long chapter of history in which the episcopacy became not only the administrative arm of the church but the tribunal which judged the quality of men's spiritual life and the accuracy of their theological statements."[1] * * * By investing bishops with judiciary power, the problem of deciding on the character of prophets was solved in the only way possible at a time when people were facing a variety of practical issues, all of which sprang from non-fulfilment of the Messianic expectation. And the exceptional value and interest attaching to the apocalypse of Hermas lies in the light that it sheds on this transitional period in which second-century Christians, whose enthusiasm over the coming of Messiah-Jesus had waned, were seeking to adjust to the society in which they lived doctrines and rules intended for a transient world.

[1] Op. cit., p. 46.

VII

THE FOURTH GOSPEL AND THE SYNOPTICS

As one after another of the disciples, the personal witnesses to the life and work of Jesus, disappeared and as year after year fervent expectation of the Master's return cooled and waned, there developed among his followers a feeling of anxiety over the preservation of the traditions concerning him. A deepening sense of need was felt for some written record of the story that was in danger of being forgotten. Accordingly, about the year 70, one John Mark undertook to give formal shape to the "reminiscences" he had received from the disciple Peter. During the next decade this condensed chronicle, dealing for the most part with Jesus' deeds, was considerably enlarged and enriched by further traditions, more especially of the sayings of Jesus (logia), transmitted from the notes of

the disciple Matthew and incorporated into his narrative by this second biographer. Some twenty years later a third biography appeared, the work of one Luke, who carefully sifted the fragmentary and imperfect material at his disposal and enriched the story further still by the addition of elements not embodied in the two earlier biographies. Thus by the year 100 or thereabouts three attempts had been made at reducing to written form a connected narrative of the tradition concerning Jesus. And all three, though easily differentiated, resemble each other to so great a degree that Griesbach, in 1774, gave them the name "Synoptic" to indicate the fact of parallel passages, furnishing a common view of Jesus' life and work. But in the second century the story took on fresh elements and a reinterpretation to prepare it for satisfactory circulation among Greek-speaking and Greek-thinking converts to Christianity—an interpretation wholly foreign to Palestinian modes of thought. In other words, the original stream of tradition became impregnated with the soil of the territory through which it flowed. Precisely as the Mississippi is laden with detritus from the lands through which it runs, lands far removed from the river's source, so the

water of life that had its rise in Galilean springs at the beginning of our era became commingled early in the second century with the water of life supplied by Greek philosophy, Alexandrian allegorizing and other collateral streams of speculation and lore. The practical ethics, the concrete eschatology and the gospel of philanthropy which constituted the primal contribution of Jesus, all underwent rehabilitation in terms of Greek metaphysical thinking. The objective Jesus became the subjective Christ, the son of Joseph and Mary was transfigured as the preëxistent Lord from heaven, temporarily embodied on earth, destined to return to the bosom of the Father and thereafter to persist as a universal, permanent Comfort and Inspiration for all who believe in his unique Sonship and function. And this metaphysical reinterpretation of the primitive tradition, published during the first quarter of the second century, took its place in the New Testament as the Fourth Gospel.

No other Bible book has been the source of such prolonged and heated controversy. A veritable library of controversial literature there is, devoted exclusively to the various vexed and open questions relating to this Gospel. Nowhere has the higher criticism been more bitterly re-

sented than in the field of Fourth-Gospel thought. · Yet nowhere has the criticism been more constructive and triumphant. Many who accept the decision of the higher criticism concerning the non-Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch stoutly resist its verdict on the non-apostolic authorship of this gospel. Many who acknowledge the composite character of the book of Isaiah repudiate the contention that the "Johannine" literature is also composite. On the other hand, this same higher criticism—the dread of the dogmatist, the delight of the free-thinker, the despair of the ecclesiastic, the foe of the traditionalist, the friend of every reverent seeker after truth—has worked out many results with reference to this gospel on which suspected heretics and trusted orthodox scholars agree.

Concerning its authorship we unfortunately have no positive knowledge whatever. All we know on this point is negative in its nature. We know the gospel was not written by the disciple whose name it bears and with whose character the Synoptics have acquainted us. There he appears as an illiterate fisherman, a man of intemperate zeal, a "son of thunder," one who tried to persuade his mother to prevail upon Jesus to secure a seat for him in the coming

kingdom. If, then, we are to believe that this man was the author of the most profound and philosophical book in the New Testament we shall have to assume that his whole nature underwent a complete and radical change; that, without education, he became an adept in Greek philosophy, the Apocrypha and the writings of Philo; that he acquired a mastery of style and a vigor of expression not paralleled elsewhere in the Bible; that he surpassed Paul in scholarship and exceeded Philo in philosophical penetration and insight.

We know also that this gospel was not written by any Palestinian Jew of the first century, because it shows an unfamiliarity with places and customs that would have been impossible for a native Jew. The author shows a *literary,* not a *personal,* acquaintance with the geography and ethnology of Palestine.[1] He was a Hellenist, a Jew born and reared outside of Palestine. That he was a Jew is evidenced by his use of Aramaic names, such as "sabbatha," "Messias," etc. Moreover, he believed that "salvation is of the Jews,"[2] and though he slights the Mosaic Law he yet regards the Pentateuch as

[1] *e.g.*, 11:51; 18:13.

[2] 4:22.

a book of prophecy[1] and holds the Old Testament in such esteem as no born Gentile would have entertained. Again, so radically different is the subject-matter of this gospel from what we read in the other three (as we shall shortly see) that it precludes the possibility of ascribing to it any *apostolic* authorship. No disciple of Jesus could have entered so early and so easily into the spirit and content of Greek Alexandrian thought. No follower of Jesus could have survived long enough into the second century to make possible the grasp and presentation in gospel form of so thoroughly Hellenistic a work. In the appendix to the gospel (as the last chapter has been called) there is a passage[2] which seems to indicate that originally the gospel appeared anonymously. For the plain purpose of the passage is to claim the gospel for "the beloved disciple" whom tradition has identified (but without scriptural warrant) with John. Internal evidence, then, compels the conclusion that the author of the Fourth Gospel is unknown and unknowable. Nor does external evidence give us occasion to modify this conclusion. It is in the writings of Irenæus, who flourished about the year 170, that we first meet with the

[1] 10:35. [2] 21:24.

ascription of the gospel to the disciple John. But inasmuch as this attribution was based on the misconception of a passage in the "Expositions" of Papias, describing John (the presbyter) as "a disciple of the Lord," the testimony of Irenæus loses its validity. Whether, as Harnack holds, and after him Bousset, the gospel was written by this John of Ephesus, is still an open question; scholars generally are not yet agreed upon it. But since both internal and external testimony combine to disprove the traditional view of the gospel's authorship it should be spoken of not as "John's," but rather as "the Fourth" Gospel.

Concerning its date scholarship is still somewhat divided, though the range of opinion is not as wide as it was a generation ago. The prevailing tendency today is to place the date nearer 90 than 150, yet not further back than 110. The main indications of date within the gospel are, first, its speculative, philosophical character as contrasted with the Synoptics; second, the suggestion of the conflict between the Judaizing and Gentilizing parties in the early church as having already passed.[1] Outside the gospel, indices of date are furnished by

[1] 10:16; 21:11.

the following facts. The earliest undisputed references to the gospel are found in the works of Irenæus and Theophilus about the year 175. The earlier Fathers of the church, Justin (150) and Ignatius (115), though familiar with the doctrine of the "Logos," or "Word," show no acquaintance with the Fourth Gospel and in their arguments draw only upon the Synoptics for authority. So also Papias (120) and Polycarp (100) use phrases found in this gospel, but not once does either of them quote from it, confining their appeal to the three earlier records. Again, the day of the death of Jesus is made the 14th of Nisan, as against the 15th reported by the Synoptics—a change of date that points to the "Easter" controversy which raged in the churches of Asia Minor toward the middle of the second century. Prior to that controversy no one would have felt constrained to effect this change of date. It grew out of a debated theological discussion and points to the party that wished to make Jesus himself the Paschal Lamb of the world.

To sum up our brief discussion of the authorship and date of the Fourth Gospel, the available evidence points to a Greek Jew, possibly a resident of Ephesus, as its author and to the year

120 as approximately the date of its composition.

Every thoughtful reader of the gospels is certain to be impressed by the many and radical differences between the first three and the fourth. We have, indeed, in the Synoptics and the Fourth Gospel two distinct portraits of Jesus. These have been compared to the biography of Socrates as written by Xenophon and by Plato. But the comparison is faulty because the two cases are not parallel. Xenophon and Plato described the same person, and though their accounts differ in many particulars they are yet complementary. The Synoptics and the Fourth Gospel do not portray the same person, and whatever resemblances the two sets of records may reveal they yet tend to neutralize each other. The Synoptics furnish a biography of the Man of Nazareth; the Fourth Gospel gives us, as we shall see in the next lecture,[1] a life of Jesus as the Logos, or "Word made flesh" in the person of Christ. The Synoptics portray a human Jesus sympathetically in touch with the physically and morally diseased; the Fourth Gospel presents a mysterious Divine being, aloof from lepers and demons, in touch with the spiritually elite. The Synoptics contain the rec-

[1] See pp. 198 *et seq.*

ord of one who was expected to return as the Messiah; the Fourth Gospel, of one who, from the beginning of creation, dwelt with God and stood in no relation to the Hebrew Messianic ideal. The Synoptists infer from the life and teaching of Jesus what his character was; the Fourth Gospel begins with a theory of his person and interprets the life in terms of that theory. The Synoptists looked on Jesus as a man, yet differing from all other men because of his matchless purity, poise and spiritual insight. To the author of the Fourth Gospel Jesus was not a man at all, but "the Word made flesh" for a brief period of two and a half years and differing from all human beings because of his unique origin. No one but he could say "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

Not only have we two distinct portraits in these two sources of information, but also two distinct teacher-types and orders of thought—a feature of the sources which separate them by an impassable gulf. The Jesus of the Synoptics is an engaging, irresistible teacher, one who makes an intensely human appeal, because he was tempted and afflicted, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; one who experienced the agony of Gethsemane and the sufferings of the

cross. The Jesus of the Fourth Gospel is not a genial and winning teacher at all, but rather a solemn, awe-inspiring expositor; one who makes little or no human appeal, for he knew nothing of temptation and such suffering as he experienced was mitigated, nay, annulled, by knowledge of "the glory" that would follow. The Synoptists have reported a Sermon on the Mount, parables and short homilies on practical ethical problems; in the Fourth Gospel there is no such sermon, there are no such parables, while such discourses as have been reported are long, elaborate, involved and concerned with the dignity, glory and Divine origin of the speaker, the Logos-Jesus. The Jesus of the Synoptics says to his disciples, "Ye are the light of the world"; the Jesus of the Fourth Gospel says, "I am the light of the world." The former speaks of immortality; the latter claims to be "the resurrection and the life." In the one, truth is taught and a way of living marked out; in the other, we read: "I am the Truth, the Way, the Life." The Jesus of the Synoptics proffers terms of salvation wholly ethical in content—"the tree is known by its fruits"; the Jesus of the Fourth Gospel imposes a theological test—"belief on him whom God hath sent." And though this "be-

lief" contains an ethical element, it nevertheless involved primarily acceptance of a theological dogma. And just as the former sets forth an ethical conception of love as the spontaneous, unselfish outgoing of heart and will toward all men, so the latter makes it a theological grace, a special sentiment of believer toward believer, the mutual considerateness of members of the same household of faith "separated" from the rest of the world. Again, in the estimation of the Synoptists the work of Jesus was his healing and teaching and eventual inauguration of the Kingdom of God; to the author of the Fourth Gospel the work of Jesus consisted, not so much in what he said or did, as in his *manifesting* himself, showing forth, in himself, as the incarnate Logos, "the glory of the invisible God."

Once more, the Synoptics report a score of miracles, mostly works of healing, and these are performed without the least circumstance and with none other than a philanthropic purpose. The Fourth Gospel makes mention of only seven miracles, mostly of a stupendous kind and as done with considerable éclat, in the presence of Jesus' enemies and for the express purpose of displaying his power; "signs," exhibit-

ing his "glory," they are, rather than the spontaneous, irresistible use of beneficent power for the sake of suffering souls. In that most stupendous of all recorded miracles, the raising of Lazarus, Jesus waits till his friend is dead, buried and the marks of decomposition have set in, before responding to the passionate plea of the sisters that he bring their brother back to life. Why this delay and disregard of the claims of friendship and grief? The answer is, in order to enhance the splendor of the miracle, itself the supreme manifestation of the glory to those who would believe.[1] Nay, more, the seven miracles are all concrete symbols of great spiritual truths and the explanation of each is given in the discourse that follows it. Only the Logos-Jesus it was thought could have done such mighty works. Surely here, if anywhere, is evidence that he was the eternal son of God. So felt the author of this gospel and accordingly he gave a conspicuous place to these miracles as compared with the place the miracle-narratives in the Synoptics hold.

No less striking than these differences between the Synoptics and the Fourth Gospel, on points common to the two sources, are the omis-

[1] John 11:11–45.

sions from the latter of incidents and sayings reported by one or another of the earlier writers. Itemizing the more important of these we find that the Fourth Gospel contains no virgin-birth story, no baptism, no temptation, no account of dealings with publicans and sinners, or with demoniacs and lepers, no beatitudes, no Sermon on the Mount, no Lord's Prayer, no transfiguration, no entry into Jerusalem, no Last Supper narrative, no allusion to any agony in the garden, no suggestion of any suffering on the cross, no statement of a bodily resurrection, or of an ascension into heaven. How shall we account for these differences and for this array of fourteen omissions from the narrative of what has been reported by earlier biographers? Fortunately, the author has himself furnished the key to an understanding of these features of his gospel. In the prologue and, again, in the last verse of the last chapter, he tells us just what his purpose was in producing this book. It was not, as we might think, to offer a complete and properly ordered account of Jesus of Nazareth, but to present a particular view of his person and life as "the Word made flesh." Consequently he selected from his available material only such portions

as fitted this conception of Jesus as the incarnate Word, the Son of God. These he set forth in a new garb and with the ulterior aim that men, believing Jesus to be such an One, "might have life through his name." Whatever parts of the tradition failed to fit in with this conception of the Divine sonship of Jesus as the incarnate Logos, the author discarded. Here, then, is the explanation of the two most distinctive features of his Gospel, its differences from the Synoptics and its omission of so much that they contain. To elucidate this explanation further we have only to ask, for example, what need had our author of a virgin-birth story, when, prior to his birth in time, Jesus was the eternal Son of God? What place could there be in this narrative for the legend of the temptation when it concerned the eternal Son of God, One who could not be subjected to any moral testings whatsoever.[1] How could the story of the transfiguration be incorporated in the Fourth Gospel when Jesus as the incarnate Logos had been invested with a Divine glory from the beginning of the world? In the words of James Martineau, "The Christology of this writer is no longer *anthropological,* lifting a

[1] 20:31.

human being into exaltation, but *theological,* bringing a Divine being into incarnation. We have here the story not of ascending humanity but of descending Divinity, of a God entering into the disguise of an earthly life and, when the mantle has fallen, reassuming his home on high. Accordingly, the Christ of this gospel has no infancy, no youth of growing wisdom, no dawning suspicion of a sacred call mocked by taunting voices from the desert, no deepening of self-devotion by conflict and widening of spiritual affections through a life of tender mercy. Here is no beginning from a day of small things with few disciples who scarce know why they follow him."[1]

Again, as the incarnate Logos, as the Light-bringer, how could he associate with publicans and sinners and be regarded as having come to save *them?* Nay, they, by their own inborn disposition, avoid the Light. All that the Logos-Jesus can do is to manifest himself as the Son of God and let those endowed with desire to seek the Light and to recognize therein the "Logos made flesh" come to him and be made one with him and with God. Not, as in the Synoptics, has Jesus come to save sinners by

[1] Martineau: "The Seat of Authority in Religion," p. 425.

rousing them to a sense of sin and leading them into the glad consciousness of Divine forgiveness. Rather has he come unto "his own," to those who "believe on him" and, simply by manifesting himself as the Logos incarnate to win disbelievers to acceptance of him as "the Word made flesh." Everywhere in the Synoptics the emphasis is on the relation of Jesus to sinners. He came to seek and save that which was lost. By the contagion of his own purity and by his powerful appeal, through parables and other media of exhortation, Jesus gave men a sense of the Divine forgiveness and raised them from their dead selves to higher things. But in the Fourth Gospel this phase of Jesus' ministry is almost wholly wanting. With the single exception of the narrative of the woman taken in adultery—an interpolation—the Fourth Gospel gives us no equivalent to what we read in the Synoptics of Jesus as the friend of sinners. On the contrary, it presents Jesus as keeping aloof from sinners. Consequently this gospel reveals a wholly different conception of the "saving" work of Jesus. Men have been given the opportunity to enter "the Father's house" through "the door," the Logos-Jesus. To refuse to enter is to be deprived of

the privileges which entrance brings. Sin, therefore, according to the author of this gospel, is simply privation, due to refusal to accept what the Logos-Jesus has come to offer. Thus the saving work of Jesus consisted in "giving power to as many as received him to become the sons of God,"[1] or, in imparting to those who were constitutionally disposed to welcome him the Life he himself had from God. Thus it was as the "Life-giver" that Jesus was the Savior.

In harmony with the same fundamental theory of Jesus' person, our author makes the *mode,* no less than the *substance,* of Jesus' speech consonant with the unique dignity and sublimity of his position, i.e., involved discourses concerning himself take the place of the impersonal, colloquial, ethical parables and sermons in the Synoptics. Reading these discourses we feel ourselves in quite a different atmosphere from that of the Synoptic addresses. We note that in the attempt to translate Jewish ideas into the language of Greek speculation our author changed their connotation almost beyond recognition. Only to a very limited degree can it be said that his Greek con-

[1] 1:12.

ceptions correspond to the thoughts of Jesus; sometimes, indeed, they appear quite foreign to what the Galilean stood for.

And yet, as Professor Scott has contended, the Hellenic form employed by our author is in some respects more adequate than the Jewish of the Synoptics as an expression of Jesus' ideas. "There was a breadth and idealism in the thought of Jesus which transcended the limits imposed on him by the Jewish modes of utterance. We cannot but feel in reading the Synoptic Gospels that he had sometimes to overstrain the language and imagery of traditional Hebrew thought in order to find expression for his message. The ideas of the Messiah and the kingdom of God meant infinitely more to the mind of Jesus than the names themselves could be made to signify. The Fourth Evangelist, when he breaks with the literal tradition and substitutes the language of Greek reflection for the actual words employed by Jesus, is not necessarily unfaithful to the Master's teaching. On the contrary, though the speeches he records have no historical genuineness as they stand, yet they give true expression in many cases to the intrinsic thought of Jesus. There were elements in the

Gospel message, and these among the most valuable, which could not come to their own until they had received a new embodiment in Hellenic forms."[1]

Thus while the primary purpose of the Synoptics was to present a faithful record of the facts of Jesus' life and work, that of the Fourth Gospel was to interpret the older record in the light of a philosophical idea applied to Jesus. Hence our author selected only those facts that fitted his special interpretation. And so it happened that whereas the Synoptists reasoned from the actual life and work of Jesus to his person, the author of the Fourth Gospel reversed this method, beginning with a theory of the person and arguing thence to the life and work of Jesus. And in this process of clothing the Jesus of history in the garb of the Greek Logos our author was compelled to set aside elements of the Synoptic narrative that we would fain preserve, to substitute for Jesus' moral attributes of sympathy, pity, forgiveness, and trust (which the Synoptics regard as the marks of his spiritual greatness) metaphysical attributes usually associated with God alone; to replace the revelation, through Jesus,

[1] E. F. Scott: "The Fourth Gospel," pp. 7–8.

of God's providence and fatherhood, by a revelation, through the Logos, of God's absolute being and self-dependence; to transform simple works of healing into astounding miracles and simple ethical addresses into complicated theological disquisitions.

It remains to ask: What were the sources upon which our author drew for the preparation of his gospel? That he had the Synoptic Gospels before him as his main material is evidenced by the fact that he follows the Synoptic story throughout, setting before the reader the same general picture of Jesus as the teacher, the worker of miracles and the master who is surrounded by disciples who but partially understand his mission and message. Yet everywhere we see skilful adaptation of the earlier records to the particular purpose the author had in view, together with that heightening of the character of Jesus which the author's fundamental idea of the Logos, as adapted to Jesus, required. Nay, more, we observe also that the main incidents in the career of Jesus as reported by the Synoptics reappear, in modified form, and in precisely the same order. Thus we have first, the introduction of John the Baptist into the story and the assumption of his

work by Jesus; then, the first of a succession of miracles, performed in Galilee; then, controversy with Scribes and Pharisees; then, the confession of Peter that Jesus is the Christ, marking off the Galilean from the Judean ministry; and, finally, the various scenes of the Passion, the order throughout paralleling what we find in the Synoptics, but, of course, with just such adaptations to the author's conception of Jesus as we should expect. He is presented at the very outset as the Messiah and as having fore-knowledge of his career. The healing-ministry begins with the Cana miracle and immediately thereafter the center of activity is Jerusalem. Thus while keeping fairly close to his Synoptic sources the author of the Fourth Gospel shapes them to his purpose and his conception of Jesus as the incarnate Word. Indeed we may go further and maintain that the gospel according to Mark was the primary source our author employed, for he follows it very closely and several times quotes from it verbatim. With the gospel according to Matthew he shows some acquaintance, but, by reason of its pronounced Judaizing tone and color, he could not have been strongly attracted to it. Portions of the gospel according to Luke he

seems to have recast in the mould of his fundamental thought, illustrated for instance by the treatment of the narrative of the *healing* miracles. For while in Luke's gospel the stress is laid on the possession of faith by the person healed, in the Fourth Gospel the emphasis is on the magnitude of the miracle.[1] In addition to these three gospels our author must have had access to still other sources. For we find in his gospel, narratives that would scarcely have been invented for expository purposes, but must rather have been incorporated from some non-canonical source. Included in these is the story of the Samaritan woman at the well, with whom Jesus conversed so democratically;[2] the story of the woman taken in adultery, bringing to light the infinite sympathy and magnanimity of Jesus;[3] the story of Jesus washing his disciples' feet, symbolizing the secret of helpful service;[4] the incident of Jesus, on the cross, commending his mother to the beloved disciple.[5] All these we wish to believe are part of a solid tradition, yet the form and language in which

[1] Cf. Luke 7:2 *et seq.* with John 5:5 *et seq.*
[2] 4:6 *et seq.*
[3] 8:1 *et seq.*
[4] 13:4 *et seq.*
[5] 19:25–26, cf. 5:4; also Matt. 12:37–49.

they have been narrated make it impossible for us to determine what measure of historical validity, if any, they have. On the other hand these very narratives represent that portion of the Fourth Gospel which has ever made the strongest appeal to Christian readers, because they bear witness to the essential greatness of Jesus far more than do the metaphysically-grounded discourses or the self-glorifying wonder-works. Yet even these are not without their deeper significance enshrining the innermost spirit of Jesus as revealer of the Father and preparer of the way to eternal life by the manifestation of himself.

In view of all that has been said of the relation of the Fourth Gospel to the Synoptics it must be clear that its author employed the selective principle, drawing from the Synoptic story only such elements as harmonized with his special aim, omitting many an incident which failed to fall in with his reinterpretation of the biography in terms of the Logos idea. And inasmuch as the Fourth Gospel did not aim to present a life of the historical Jesus, but rather a life of the Logos incarnate, it cannot serve as an authentic source of information concerning the real Jesus. We are inevitably

forced to choose between it and the Synoptics for an authoritative account of Jesus of Nazareth. We choose the latter because they purport to furnish what we seek and because we find that, as a whole, their record is reliable.

VIII

THE PRIMITIVE CHRISTIAN MESSAGE IN TERMS OF GREEK PHILOSOPHY

We saw in the preceding lecture that the author of the Fourth Gospel sought to make intelligible to the Greek-speaking people for whom he wrote, the story of Jesus' life and work. This, in his judgment, was possible only by reinterpreting the narrative in terms of a doctrine long familiar to Greek thinkers, the doctrine of the "Logos," or Divine Agent in the creating of the world. We have now to see what this doctrine involved and how our author made use of it in the task he had set himself. At the time when his gospel was written Christianity had been separated from its historical Jewish origin for more than half a century. The great apostle to the Gentiles had caused the center of Christian activity to be transferred from Jerusalem to Antioch. In his

missionary labors he had confined his attention to setting forth his theology with its new theory of salvation. He had made but scanty allusion to the facts of Jesus' earthly life which to him was a "humiliation" and, as such, overshadowed by his crucifixion and resurrection, the pivotal points in Paul's Christology. If then Christianity was to perdure as a vital faith in the larger world to which it had been introduced by missionary enterprise, it must offer an intelligible account of the historic Jesus, its fountain-source. Simply to transmit the facts in the Jewish modes of thought presented by the Synoptic writers was not enough, for, the facts could not be understood by converts trained in Greek ways of thinking. If the personality of Jesus and the content of his message were to be life-giving to people in the new environment, they must be interpreted in terms familiar to people accustomed to Greek modes of thought. Here, then, was a great opportunity to meet a vital, pressing need; and the supreme service rendered by the author of the Fourth Gospel lay in his seizing this opportunity and presenting the needed interpretation. See with what practical wisdom he addressed himself to the task. Realizing that it would not do to be

meticulously cautious about repeating the salient ideas of the story in the precise form in which they were known to Palestinian Jews, he takes warranted liberties with his material. To him the all-important consideration was that these Gentiles should understand the story of Jesus. So our author essayed the task of reinterpretation with the conviction that when he deliberately modified recorded statements he was most loyal to his function as an interpreter and propagandist. Almost parallel to his wise and tactful mode of appeal was that of the Englishman summoned to deliver a diplomatic message to an official of the Japanese government. He felt that it would be best to present the message in Japanese, even though delivered to him in English and that instead of drafting a literal translation of its actual words he ought to take such liberties with the text of the message as would insure its intelligibility. For, the original English statement, excellent in itself, had the serious drawback of not being understood by him for whom it was intended. So the author of the Fourth Gospel translated Jewish thought into Greek thought. He understood his readers. He was familiar with their ways of thinking and thus he was enabled to bring

them the primitive Christian message in a form they could grasp and appreciate. Let us then see just how the task was fulfilled, how the Synoptic story, with its distinctively Jewish terminology and order of ideas, was transformed and made intelligible to the Gentile world, by this unknown Hellenist. To him was it given to prepare and to publish—outside of Palestine, perhaps at Ephesus, the birthplace of Heraclitus and the chief seat of Paul's missionary labors—a gospel which set forth the life of Jesus in its eternal meaning, which showed that real discipleship was a possibility for all who had never seen or heard Jesus and who yet believed on him; which showed, moreover, that this oneness, which might be enjoyed by all, was no vague abstraction but an inner reality and that the Christ of inward religious experience was one with the Christ of history. Once published, the new gospel was received as the "spiritual" gospel because it thus set forth the innermost significance of the life and work of Jesus. At the very outset it stated that doctrine of pre-existence upon which Paul had touched but which was unknown to the Synoptists. Indeed, the whole life of Jesus, including his death and resurrection, was presented

as "a manifestation of the glory of the incarnate Logos" illuminating the world and "reconciling" men to God. In other words, the gospel-story was no longer that of a man who, from time to time in his earthly career, "manifested the glory," or who, ultimately, in his resurrection, had been glorified; the transfiguration was continuous, extending throughout the eternity of his being. Such, in brief, was the sublime purpose and achievement of the author of the Fourth Gospel. And, as Professor Scott has suggested, the achievement saved Christianity from the double danger of evaporating into a dry and fruitless philosophy, or petrifying into a mere tradition. Conscious of man's perpetual need of at-one-ment with what is infinite and eternal our author so presented the person of Jesus that men could feel they had seen God when they had seen Jesus.

The chief obstacle to acceptance of the gospel among Greeks was the Synoptic portraiture of Jesus as a member of the Jewish race, more despised than any other. In the Fourth Gospel that obstacle is overcome. For, there, Jesus is presented as not originally Jewish, or even human, but as born without an earthly mother and as antedating the universe—in a word, the in-

carnate Logos. Nay, we may go further in our estimate of this achievement and see in our author's stroke of genius not only mastery of the main difficulty in making Christianity acceptable to the Greek-speaking world, but also the basis for a philosophy of that religion. For, by conceiving Jesus as the eternal Word of God he forthwith presented him to readers in a threefold capacity. First of all as the agent of God in the creating of the world (the Logos long known to educated Greeks through the speculation of their own philosophers), then as the Manifestor of God, or the *incarnate* Logos, the Logos having now entered on a second function, viz.: of revealing God (whom no man at any time had seen) and thereupon returning to the bosom of the Father, only, however, to enter on a third mission as a permanent Influence, the "Paraclete" or "Comforter" who would abide with believers as a constant source of inspiration and joy. Nor does this exhaust the total purpose which the Fourth Gospel fulfilled. The Christology of the Synoptics and that of the Pauline epistles had not yet been harmonized. The Christian world at the beginning of the second century was still confronted with two unamalgamated conceptions

of the person of Jesus—the one representing him as the faithful Servant of God, glorified and exalted at His right hand, delivered by Him out of the power of death and Sheol in order that when His chosen people have repented of their wickedness in rejecting His Son the latter would return again as the Christ to restore the kingdom to Israel and reign forever in the transfigured Jerusalem; the other, representing this same glorified Jesus as identical with the pre-existent spirit: the former, portrayed in the Synoptic Gospels, the latter, in the Pauline epistles: the one, Hebraic in origin and essence, propagated on Hebrew soil where the Messianic hope had evolved to the point of looking for the Christ to come down on the clouds from heaven; the other, generated in the atmosphere of Greek concepts, of "redeemer-gods" that descended to earth, battled for the true and good and then ascended to the empyrean whence they came. The two Christologies could not thus stand in seeming opposition or at least in unrelated juxta-position. They must needs be harmonized, amalgamated, synthesized, if Christianity were to take a permanent hold on the Gentile world. Now the achieving of this necessary coalition of the two

dissociated Christologies was the work of this talented Hellenist. For, the Fourth Gospel tells the story of Jesus in such a way that Gentile thinkers could see in it a due recognition of these two familiar doctrines of pre-existence and incarnation, in which, as Pauline Christians, they had been trained, but of which the Synoptic writers had no knowledge at all. Taking his stand on Paul's theory of the pre-existent Christ, and on the ancient Greek idea of the Logos, he told the Synoptic story in terms of these conceptions, and so satisfied the paramount needs of the Gentile Christian world. It is, then, to the doctrine of the pre-existent spirit, or Logos, that we must look ultimately for the link that bound the Christology of the Synoptics with that of the apostle Paul and made possible a life of Jesus intelligible and acceptable to the Hellenic mind.

What is this Logos in terms of which the Synoptic story was retold, and whence was it derived? Our author took it over directly from Philo, a Greek Jew who flourished in Alexandria about the year 20 A. D., and is best known by his attempted harmonizing of Old Testament theology with Greek philosophy. He, in turn, was indebted to the Stoics for his introduction

to the Logos, as were they to Heraclitus, with whom the conception seems to have originated in the sixth century before our era. He held that the world is pervaded by an eternal Reason, or Logos, which possesses its own inner energy and gets outward concrete expression in Nature and man, a power analogous to the reasoning power in man. This idea was taken over by the Stoics to solve their problem of the chasm that separates God and the world—the Logos being the Reason of the invisible God projected, as it were, for the purpose of creating the cosmos and maintaining it as an orderly system. From the Stoics the doctrine was taken over by Philo and fitted into his Græco-Judaic cosmology. Much of Hebrew literature dating from the Greek period shows the influence of this Greek speculation, so that for Philo the harmonizing process was considerably simplified. Thus, for example, we read in the thirty-third Psalm that the heavens were established by "the Word"[1] (the logos or agent of creation), plainly illustrating a tendency to isolate the uttered word as God's instrument of activity. Similarly in the Apocryphal books, the "Wisdom of Solomon" and "Ecclesiasticus,"

[1] Ps. 33:6.

we find this thought expressed with still closer approximation to the Greek conception. "Wisdom is a creative power, a pure influence proceeding from the glory of the Almighty."[1] Ben Sirach describes the word as "the first-born of God, the active agent of the creation."[2] From such Biblical and inter-Biblical passages the transition to Philo's doctrine of the Logos was as direct as from the writings of the Stoics by which he had been so deeply impressed. But in order that we may see the immediate relation of the Logos of the Fourth Gospel to what we read in Philo's work, it will be necessary briefly to summarize his doctrine—made attractively accessible to English readers in Professor James Drummond's "Philo Judæus." According to Philo, God in His essence is invisible and unknowable, dwelling in remote, inaccessible heights, enveloped in absolute holiness. As such He could not come in contact with "vile matter." To have personally created the world would have been an act wholly incompatible with His absolute purity and exalted station. Accordingly there proceeded from Him a force, or power, through which the actual work of

[1] Wisd. of Sol. 7 and 8.
[2] Ecclus. 24:23 *et seq.*

creating the world was achieved and which thus served as a connecting link between God and the visible world. To this emanation the name "Logos" was given, an abstract principle, or force, endowed with independent existence, detached from the world which it created, yet subordinate to God. For He, indeed, was the Creator, though creation was mediated through the Logos, working in accordance with the Divine Will. Philo, it must be remembered, was a Jew, and as such he could not surrender the monotheism in which he had been reared. Thus the original Greek conception of an immanent Reason was Hebraized by Philo and given a semi-independent existence under the supreme God. By thus combining his Hebrew monotheism with the Stoic doctrine of the Logos, Philo was enabled to explain how the world was created and maintained as an intelligible order. Philo personified the Logos but never did he identify it with any human personality—the probable reason being that, for him, no one ever existed worthy to be thus identified with the Logos. Had Philo been born twenty years after Jesus instead of twenty years before him, the step from personification of the Logos to hypostatization (the identifying of it with an

historic personality) might have been effected by the philosopher. It remained for the author of the Fourth Gospel to take this further step. And it was made possible for him because side by side with increasing speculation on the nature and function of the Logos there went a continuous process of idealization of the person of Jesus. It began while he was still on earth in the attributing to him of the Messianic title and the expectation that he would fulfil the office of Messiah and "redeem Israel." The process was advanced by Paul's conception of "the glorified Son of God," who "from the beginning dwelt with the Father," and who "laid aside his glory" that he might become the Savior of the world. Thus this parallel development of speculation and idealization prepared the way for that identification of the Logos with Jesus which we first meet with in explicit form in the Fourth Gospel. Here it is shown that whereas the *first* phase or mode of being of the Logos was that of Divine Agent, creating the visible world, this emanation from God had now entered upon a *second* stage of historic energy by becoming flesh in the person of Jesus who was thus the accessible, visible manifestation of the invisible inaccessible God. And it

is further shown that when this term of manifestation shall have expired, the Logos-Jesus will return to his original home in the bosom of the Father and enter on a *third* stage of historic energy as "the Spirit of Truth, the Comforter," an abiding Presence in the hearts of all believers who will receive him and his Father and be one with both. Thus the Logos of the Fourth Gospel is not an abstract principle, as with the Stoics and Philo, but a person; not a cosmic agent merely, but a spiritual Redeemer. All that had been predicated of the Greek Logos could be also predicated of Jesus, for he was not only the Jesus of history but also the preëxistent being, a second God,[1] the supreme manifestation of God, "sent from the Father" as speech goes forth from a man and reveals his inner character. Between Philo and the author of the Fourth Gospel came Paul, whose epistles bear witness to his having had a pronounced logos-doctrine (though he never used the term Logos) conceiving of Jesus as an intermediary being, higher than all angels yet lower than God. He declared Jesus to be the "second Adam," and, as such, ascribed to him

[1] Note the author's careful distinction in the first verse of his gospel between *a* God and *the* God.

pre-existence in heaven as the ideal man and assigned him a part in the work of creation and in the history of the world. Between Philo and our author came also the writers of the epistles to the Hebrews and the Colossians, a connecting link between Paul's conception and what we find in the Fourth Gospel. For, in these epistles Jesus is described as "the reflection of the Deity, the maker and sustainer of all that is in heaven and on earth." From this it was but a single step to the statement that the Eternal Word appeared bodily in the person of Jesus. And this is the starting-point of the Fourth Gospel. Here, and here only, do we find a complete identification of Jesus with the Logos of Philo. What our author did was to let the divine Logos "play the part of soul to a human body and use the living mask through the scenes of an earthly drama; and, thus interpreted, the story of Jesus of Nazareth at once became a Theophany." [1]

Given, then, the idea entertained by Heraclitus—the first among Greek philosophers to conceive of Reason, or Logos, as a Divine agent—given the further development of his theory as worked out by the Stoics and elaborated by

[1] Martineau Op., cit, p. 427.

Philo, given also the witness of passages in Old Testament books, written during and after the Greek period, together with what we read in the Apocrypha, and the materials are at hand for tracing the genealogy of that hypostasis of the Logos that characterizes the Fourth Gospel. Its author availed himself of the legacy of speculation in Greek and Hebrew circles in order that he might make intelligible to minds familiar with that idea the life and work of Jesus interpreted in terms of the Logos. He presents the Sonship of Jesus as a metaphysical conception drawn from Greek philosophy. God existed from all eternity in fellowship with another being, one with Him indeed, though less than He and therefore called his Son. Then, to this Philonian position our author adds the hypostatizing statement that this second God of Greek speculation was manifested in Jesus the Christ, the opening verses (or prologue) of his gospel striking its keynote: "In the beginning was the Logos and the Logos was a God," and it "became flesh" in order that "God whom no man had seen at any time might be made manifest."

Not only does the Fourth Gospel root itself in a Greek idea, but it also unfolds with all the stateliness, dignity and order of a Greek tra-

gedy. And here I but amplify what Professor Scott has suggested in his illuminating book. First, in a simple, brief prologue of eighteen verses, corresponding to the "Choragus" of a Greek drama, we are made acquainted with the fundamental conception which is essential to the understanding and appreciation of that which is to follow—the Logos and its incarnation. After this preparatory prologue the hero of the drama, the incarnate Logos, passes before us in a succession of cardinal situations, the whole comprised in a series of five acts. In the first act (chapter 1-4) the Logos-Jesus enters as the Light-bringer, illuminating the world, and all men seeming to welcome the Light and to respond to it. In the second act (chapters 5 and 6) we see signs of hostility to the Light, scepticism spreads and men are found taking sides for and against the Light. The Logos-Jesus has enemies as well as friends. In the third act (chapters 7-12) the enemies are seen to be greatly in the majority, people generally have settled down into an attitude of pronounced antagonism. Only a small group rally round the hero and they are drawn more and more closely to him as the drama proceeds. Then follows the fourth, the most touching and

deeply impressive act (chapters 13-17), in which the hero is left alone with these bosom-friends and reveals to them, in the solemn stillness of the supper-room, his inmost spiritual convictions.

Meanwhile the hatred of his enemies reaches a climax and we have a fifth and final act (chapters 18-20). Here we see the Light overwhelmed, for a moment, by the powers of darkness and then rising triumphant and victorious. And by as much as this theological drama presents the *personality* of Jesus as an ever-present Influence that may be universally felt and the *work* of Jesus as that of the Light-bringer and Giver of the more abundant life, the Fourth Gospel, however untrustworthy as a source of information concerning the historical man of Nazareth, yet *supplements* the Synoptic record in a very real and indispensable way, revealing the essential character and inmost spirit of Jesus to a degree not attained by the earlier writers. Especially do they fall short of portraying the idealism that was in Jesus, and it is brought to light only by reading back into the Synoptic record what the author of the Fourth Gospel, by reason of his philosophically-grounded interpretation of the person of Jesus,

could show forth. But, now, to come still closer to our subject, let us see how our author succeeded in other phases of his task. For illustration let us take, first, the three titles by which Jesus is designated in the Synoptic Gospels—*Messiah, Son of Man, Son of God;* and then let us take the three cardinal doctrines of the primitive Christian message preserved for us in those records; the *Messiahship of Jesus, the coming of the kingdom of God,* and the *"Parousia,"* or expected return of Jesus. Let us see how our author reinterpreted these titles and doctrines, stripping them of their particular Jewish implications, identifying them with his conception of the Logos, and so making them intelligible to the readers for whom his work was intended.

The title "Messiah" connected Jesus in popular Jewish thought with the great historic hope of Israel. He, it was felt, would be the inaugurator of that heavenly kingdom which the prophets had predicted, and in which the prosperity, peace and independence of David's day would once more bless the earth. Paul, it will be remembered, did not transcend this expectation.[1] That Jesus shared the popular expectation of a

[1] I. Cor. 15:51-53; I. Thess. 4:16 *et passim.*

coming kingdom of God has already been shown by illustrative quotations from the Synoptics. Whether he believed that he himself would inaugurate the new order of society may be questioned. But there can be no doubt that he transcended both the popular conception of the kingdom and of the Messiahship. His prime interest in the kingdom was ethical rather than political. For him it meant an outward world in which Righteousness reigned and an inward personal state on which entrance to it depended. Hence he could say, "Seek first the kingdom of God," and also, "The kingdom is within you"—moral fitness for the privilege of admission being the prerequisite of membership. Thus to the mind of Jesus the terms "Kingdom of God" and "Messiah" had a double significance and because of his constant emphasis on its ethical import he subjected himself to inevitable misunderstanding. Having assumed the rôle of prophet and teacher, having taken on himself the mission of preparing people for entrance into the coming kingdom, he had no alternative, when pressed, but to tolerate the historic title, albeit he had transcended the popular political interpretation of it and concentrated his thought on its spiritual implica-

tions. No wonder then that his sense of its inadequacy as a descriptive title caused him to request his disciples not to apply the title to him and that, until his departure for Jerusalem, he invariably used the substitute "Son of Man," taken from the book of Daniel and signifying one endowed with a divine calling, a title which therefore corresponded more closely than did "Messiah" to the conception he entertained of himself—one divinely commissioned to prepare the way for a higher order of personal living, to reveal the Divine Will and bring the human will into accord with that higher Will.

As for the title "Son of God," Jesus is nowhere reported as having made use of it in describing himself. Twenty-seven times does the title occur in the gospels but always on the lips of others as indicative of the absolute self-surrender, the fervent trust, the profound sense of oneness with God that were in the heart of Jesus. Now in the Fourth Gospel all three of these Jewish titles are de-Hebraized and used interchangeably as equally descriptive of the incarnate Logos. Jesus was the Messiah not (as in one or another of the Synoptics) because of his Davidic descent, or his Bethlehem birth, or because the main incidents of his life were

the fulfilment of Hebrew prophecy, but because of his divine origin, he having come from God and been sent forth by Him to serve, first, as the creator-Logos, then as the Logos-incarnate and finally as the "Paraclete," or Comforter.

Jesus was the "Son of Man" not, as in the Synoptics, because of the sublime rôle he was to fulfil as God's representative on earth in ushering in the new kingdom, but because he was the Logos *made flesh* "manifesting himself under the conditions of human life." Again, Jesus was the "Son of God" not, as in the Synoptics, because of his deep-seated sense of close personal relationship to God, but because his Sonship was of a unique kind, he having been "*begotten* of the Father." And when he became flesh he still retained his Sonship, his earthly life, being literally one with the preceding heavenly life. He was the Logos and as such he was one with God and by communicating to others his own life he enabled them to share with him the life of God. Moreover, being the Logos, essentially one with Deity, Jesus was *more* than the latest of the Hebrew prophets. He was the complete and absolute revealer of God, whereas they who had preceded him did but *reflect,* not *manifest,* the eternal Light.

As with these titles so with the cardinal doctrines—they, too, are interpreted by our author in terms of the Logos. The Messiahship of Jesus meant, not the rôle of a vicegerent of God coming on the clouds to establish the expected kingdom, but the rôle of an emanation from God, entering upon the second of his historic functions, the manifesting to men of the invisible God. He was indeed "the anointed of God," consecrated before the world began to the fulfilment of the Divine Will, first in respect to the creation of the cosmos, then, in regard to manifesting God to man, and finally in the securing of permanent fellowship and inspiration for all who "believe on His name."

So, again, in dealing with the doctrine of the kingdom, our author broke with Hebrew tradition and worked out a new rendering intelligible to his Greek readers. For the miraculous transformation of society promised by the Old Testament prophets and preached in turn by John, Jesus, the disciples and Paul, our author substituted the promise of "eternal life" by the Messiah-Logos, the Son of God, the Life-giver; —eternal life, not as something to be acquired, or earned, but as an outright gift from God through the Logos. The kingdom of God is

thus a society composed of those who have been "reborn" through their "belief" in the Logos, and have received in consequence the gift of "eternal life," the Logos having been made "flesh" for the express purpose of serving as the life-giver. In other words, our author had no interest in the Jewish eschatology which anticipated the advent of a kingdom of God on earth. Rather was his concern with a state of life realizable at once and attainable only from God through the Logos-Jesus, the appointed communicator of the life which is in him and in God and different in kind from that known to man, something apart, like the "higher reason" of Aristotelean philosophy.[1] The life that is in God and therefore also in the Logos differs from that of man's experience, and by no ethical self-discipline can he attain it. It can only be imparted and only after the occurrence of a radical change in his nature. And this, like the life itself, can be attained only through belief in the incarnate Logos as the divinely ordained life-giver. And by as much as the Jesus of the Synoptic Gospels held that the Kingdom has already come where men are doing the Divine will, our author's conception of eternal life

[1] Nic. Eth. 10:6.

as a spiritual condition immediately realizable, supplements and brings into relief the essential thought of the historic Jesus as presented in the biographies of the first three evangelists.

Passing now to the "Parousia" we note in the Fourth Gospel a reinterpretation of its Synoptic content corresponding to what we have already observed in the case of the other two cardinal doctrines of the primitive message. Clearly our author has no interest in the politico-social expectations of the first century in Palestine. Or, to speak more accurately, he has transcended them, and therefore also the disappointment of his contemporaries over the non-fulfilment of those expectations. From the standpoint of his approach to the Synoptic record he felt that the disappointment of those who "trusted it was he" (Jesus) who "would redeem Israel" was due to their misunderstanding of his promise. They had only themselves to blame for the gloom of unfulfilled hope that enveloped them. Our author held that the real Parousia, the actual coming of Jesus, has already occurred. It occurred when, after his death, he returned to heaven and resumed his original place in the bosom of the Father. For, then it was that, freed from the limitations at-

tending his life on earth, he could dwell with believers as a permanent Influence, Inspiration, Comforter. As an inward Presence, abiding forever with those who accepted him as the Logos, Jesus had already returned. Such was the revised doctrine of the Parousia—an interpretation calculated to restore hope and courage to the hearts of a despondent people vainly looking into the sky for their expected "Lord" and growing sceptical as to the foundation of their religion. Obviously, in the light of this conception of the promised return of Jesus, his resurrection could have had no such significance for our author as it had for the apostle Paul. On the contrary, instead of being the central, pivotal doctrine of his religious system, the resurrection was but an incident that marked the transition from his function as the incarnate Logos, manifested on the earth, to the subsequent broader and permanent function of the Comforter, assumed immediately on his return to heaven.

Closely connected with the Jewish expectation of Jesus' return upon the clouds as Messiah was the belief that he would then act as the final Judge of mankind, pronouncing his doom upon the sinful world and taking unto

himself the elect. This judiciary function the author of the Fourth Gospel interprets so as to fit it into his theory of the Logos. That is to say, he presents Jesus in the capacity of a Judge while he is still on earth as the incarnate Logos. As a magnet sifts out iron filings in a dish of sand, so He sifted from out "the darkness" the "children of light." As he moved about among men, simply manifesting himself, they were either attracted or repelled. They had opportunity to accept or to reject him and according as they chose they, in truth, judged themselves. To quote again from the suggestive book of Professor Scott, on the Fourth Gospel: "The Fourth Evangelist accepts the doctrine of a Messianic judgment which he found current in the Church and gives it a new development in line with his characteristic ideas. The judgment is taken out of the future and carried back into the actual life of Christ. While he lived on earth he was already endowed with all the prerogatives of the Son of God; and one chief purpose of his coming was to judge men in virtue of that sovereign power which the Father had intrusted to his hands. He does not pass formal judgment on men; it is enough that he has revealed himself and

given them the opportunity of declaring their attitude toward him. This is the condemnation that light is come into the world but men 'loved the darkness rather than the light.' The judgment is, on his part, involuntary, for his whole desire is to draw men unto him and save them. The Light has come into the world and, according to their nature, men are drawn to it or repelled; and according as they are for or against the Light they are judged, revealing themselves as either 'children of light or children of darkness.'" [1]

Thus by the adoption of the Logos idea and making it serve as the basis for a reinterpretation of the Synoptic story, Christianity was wholly loosed from the Jewish provincialism in which Paul had left it by his retention of the Messianic expectation and lifted to the level of a universal religion. Jesus was now the Logos who had dwelt with God from the beginning of the world. He was "the true Light that lighteth every man born into the world." He was, in short, the absolute revelation of God to man. Small wonder, then, that the Fourth Gospel has been called "the spiritual gospel." Rightly has it been so styled because rooted in

[1] Scott, Op. cit. pp. 215–216.

a universal spiritual need, as perpetual as it is deep; the need, namely, of vital relation to what is infinite and ultimate and finding spiritual rest in the thought of that relation. In no other gospel do we find the sense of subordination to God and of oneness with God so synthesized as they are here, the sense of perfect spiritual freedom in complete utter obedience and self-surrender to the highest—a synthesis uniquely symbolized and personalized by the Logos-Jesus who could say: "I of myself can do nothing," and, "I and my Father are one." This, indeed, is the language of mysticism, but that language, like money, is a medium of exchange; a spiritual currency it is, negotiable all over the world.

Summary

Looking back over the ground we have covered in this course of lectures, it must be clear that, however unrelated to each other the successive topics may have appeared, they yet stand in a closely connected and even chronological relation.

After an introductory inquiry into the origin of the New Testament and the trustworthiness

of its constituent books—our main sources of information—we raised the question, What happened in Jerusalem after the crucifixion of Jesus? We saw how the despondent, despairing disciples regained their courage, came to themselves and forthwith entered on the task of preaching to the Jews of the city their firmly fixed belief in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, his ascension to heaven and his speedy return to usher in the expected Kingdom. We noted the leading characteristics of the life of this "primitive community" at Jerusalem and the remarkable success attending their missionary enterprise as preachers of a "Messianism" which distinguished them from the rest of their fellow-Jews. We saw, next, how the converted Paul, stationed at Antioch, brought on a crisis in this religious situation at Jerusalem, the issue of which was a further advance on orthodox Judaism than that represented by the apostles. We saw how Paul took the one step still necessary to the formation of *Christianity,* the "Messianism" of the apostles being but a link that historically connected Judaism with Christianity, while Paul's insistence on the sufficiency of Jesus' sacrifice as the sole source of salvation marked the *break* with Judaism

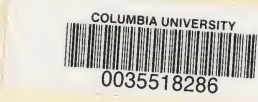
that had been but partially achieved by the Jerusalem apostles.

No sooner had the new religion been planted in the fields of Paul's missionary labors than its persistence became jeopardized by non-fulfilment of the Messianic expectation, so fervently cherished and preached by the apostle to the Gentiles. In vain did the Christians of the first century wait for the coming of their Lord. And when in the first decades of the second century the great hope seemed as far from fulfilment as ever, scepticism grew into positive disbelief, and the very foundations of Christianity threatened to give way. What was to be done regarding practices and beliefs intended for a society that was supposed to last but a little while and be replaced by "the Kingdom of God"? Have these lost their validity now that this society shows no signs of dissolution, and if so, what becomes of the religion which taught those beliefs and practices? Such was the practical problem confronting Christians toward the middle of the second century. We have seen how the genius of Hermas exhibited in "The Shepherd," solved that problem. But the new religion, established in Gentile communities was as yet without any intelligible account of

Jesus of Nazareth, its ultimate founder. The biographies that had been published were written for Jewish readers and were replete with Jewish beliefs and modes of thought that could make no appeal to the Gentile world. What, therefore, was urgently needed to round out Christianity as a religious system was a life of Jesus written with special regard to Greek-speaking and Greek-thinking people.

This, we saw, was the task undertaken by the author of the Fourth Gospel. He retold the Synoptic story in terms familiar to Gentile minds and from the point of view of the long-established doctrine of the Logos, at the same time bringing to light the deeper meaning of Jesus' personality and message, thereby *fulfilling* the work done by the Synoptists. By thus interpreting the gospel story and the primitive Christian message in modes of thought which the Gentile world could understand, the author of the Fourth Gospel supplemented the Christian system of theology as presented by the apostle Paul with that account of Jesus which was the sole requisite remaining to complete Christianity as a religious system and to permit its making a universal appeal.

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